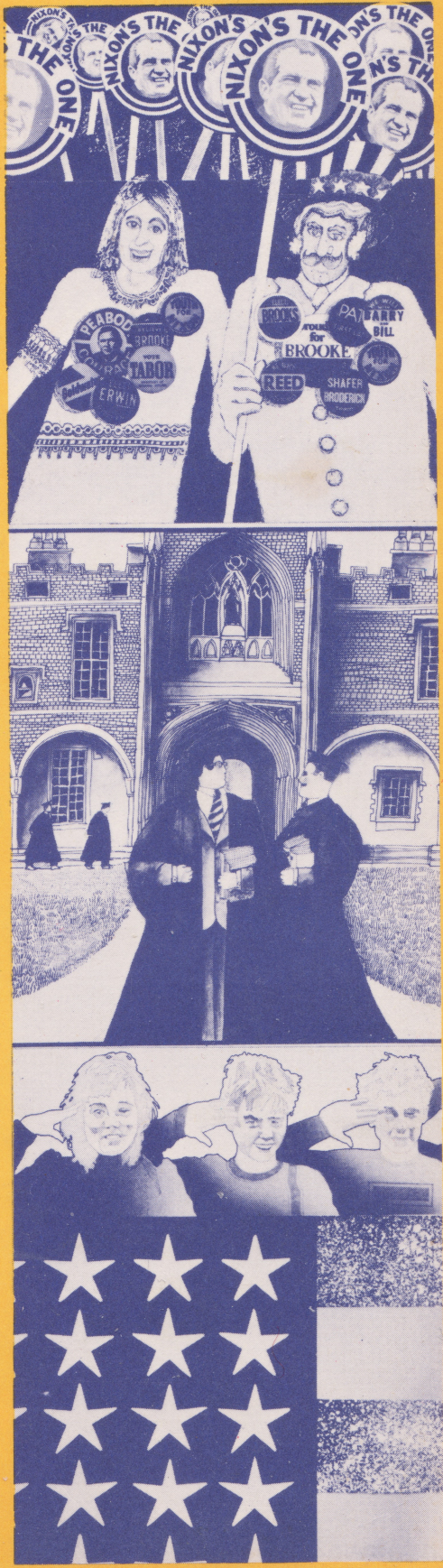
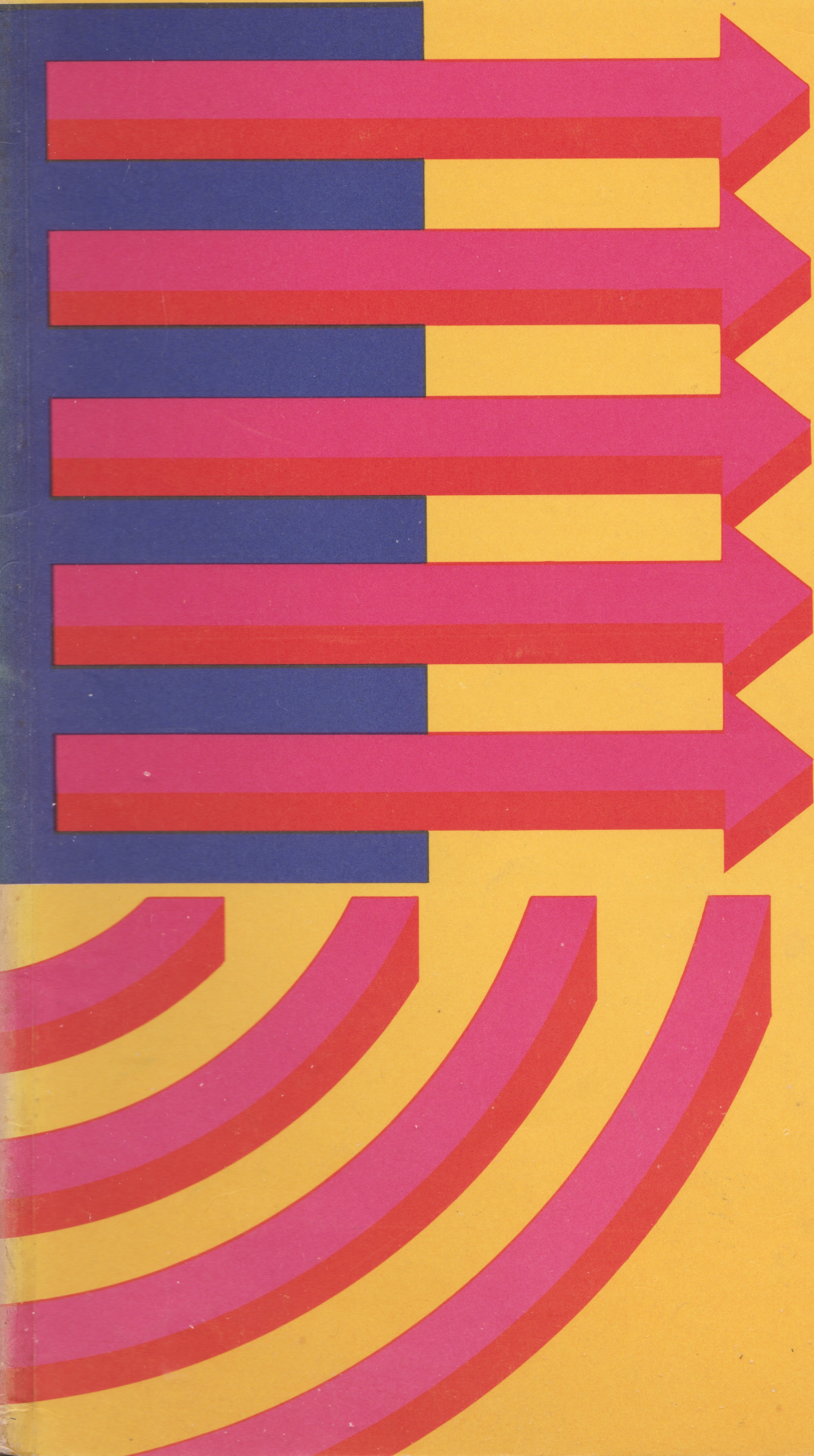




Government and Politics





THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY: A FOUNDATION COURSE UNITS 24-28

Government and Politics

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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INTRODUCTION TO UNITS 24-28 (BLOCK 6)

THE AIMS OF THE BLOCK

In this part of the course we are concerned with how people live in society. At the same time we are gaining an appreciation of different disciplines that have been developed to explain and interpret the different dimensions of society. Having looked in previous blocks at dimensions like the family, the stratification of society, the location patterns in societies, we are now looking at the way in which people live under government.

This question is one that has been the subject of particular attention for one group of social scientists and the way in which they have studied it has come to be regarded as a discipline. In the same way that the dimension concerned with location patterns is the subject of attention for geographers, so the question of how people are governed is the subject for those who pass under a variety of labels – students of politics, students of government or political scientists – but are a single group, whilst the discipline itself appears under the labels of politics, government, political studies or political science. Simply because it is convenient to distinguish the discipline from the subject of attention of the discipline, we will use the terms political science and political scientist.

We are interested, therefore, in the discipline of political science and in the object of the political scientist's attention – government. But it would be false to draw the conclusion from this that only political scientists study government or that political scientists confine their attention to government. The social sciences are not so neatly compartmentalised. Political scientists frequently branch out from a study of government (and by the end of this block you will appreciate one reason for this) and other social scientists contribute significantly to an understanding of government in society. This is true notably of sociologists, and among them of those described as social anthropologists who pioneered the study of government in non-Western primitive societies, and, indeed, this block has been prepared by a team of two political scientists and one sociologist.

In seeking to convey an understanding of government, therefore, this block draws on more than political science, but the contribution of political science is central to it, and, to the extent that this block introduces a discipline, it is that of political science. But because the block is concerned with the question how *are* people governed and not with how *ought* they to be, the major introduction is to only one part of the discipline. We have already seen in Unit 2 that these 'ought' questions about government are the ones discussed by political philosophers. It is in the political philosophy aspect of political science that such questions are discussed as: how far the individual ought to obey the state, and conversely, what ought to be the limits of the state's demands on an individual. Here we are concentrating not on what ought to be, but on understanding what actually is. The technique we are applying to understanding

government, in other words, is not one of reasoning or philosophising, but of describing, generalising, and analysing, and thus we are interested in empirical political science.¹

Men and Government

One question we are asking, therefore, is how do men live under governments; and the answer to our question is to be found in societies past and present where there has been government. One way of approaching an answer to this question is to learn in detail about each single government in the present and others in the past from the USA, India, and the Empire of Alexander the Great, to Nepal, Andorra and ancient Athens. We could try to understand each separate one, learning about the details of each and in the terms of each, in the same way as we could study each separate family. But if we want to avoid this labour, and if, more positively, we want to be able to compare and to use our understanding of one society and government in order to help us to understand another, we have to develop a common language with its general concepts, categories and models – and this is what political scientists have been doing. In order to avoid having to regard everything as a single unique phenomenon, political scientists, like other students of the social sciences, have developed general categories, and it is by using these that it becomes possible both to make generalisations about government in society, and to gain the insight and understanding that derives from being able to see the particular as an example of something general.

In this block we are going to approach the subject using the general concepts that have been developed to describe government both as a static institution and as an ongoing process. In doing this, we will be concentrating our main attention on one of what are often regarded as two halves of government. Governing can be considered to involve two activities – politics and administration. The nature of these activities and the distinction between them is something that will be explored at a later point in the block, but put crudely, politics is the activity that leads to government taking a decision and administration is the process of carrying it out. The two activities are closely interconnected and particularly in the first unit in the block, where the formal structure of government is considered, attention is necessarily given to administration. Thereafter we will, because of limitations in space and time, concentrate on politics and it will belong to one of the second level courses to explore the administrative process.²

This block follows a straightforward progression. We will start in Unit 24 with the formal structure of governments within states – the institutions that exist in particular sorts of governments and the pattern of relationships between these. In Unit 25 we will then

¹ At a later stage in the degree programme, but not in this course, there will be an opportunity for investigating this distinction between empirical political science and political philosophy, and it will become clear when you penetrate below the surface that there are difficulties in it, and that there is indeed considerable overlap between the two branches of the subject; but at this stage there is value in the distinction. And in terms of it, this block is concerned with what is and not what ought to be, and thus derives from empirical political science rather than political philosophy.

² Course D/203 *Decision Making in Britain*.

proceed to consider the informal political institutions that have no legal place within the machinery of government but which play a crucial part in determining how the formal machinery works and what decisions are taken within the machinery about the way power is used. In both these units the subject of attention is government within states: societies, that is, where there is centralised authority, and where machinery exists both to determine how that authority is exercised and to execute and to enforce this authority. These two units are dealing, in other words, with one sort of society, and there is another: societies where there is no such centralised authority and yet which are governed. The nature of this government without the state is discussed in Unit 26.

In Unit 27, a further aspect of government is introduced. For, whereas in Units 24–26, the focus of attention is institutions, or, to put it another way, the machinery of government, in Unit 27 attention is drawn to the context of ideas, beliefs and values, or the political culture, within which that machinery is operated. Having introduced the major aspects of government or at least the more political as opposed to administrative dimensions of it, this unit concludes by explaining how the constituent parts can be seen as part of a whole that is termed for convenience a political system. Finally, in Unit 28 a different level of analysis is introduced. Where the first four units have taken the whole society – the state or stateless society – as the object of attention and identified the aspects of the political system in the society, this final unit points to the fact that each of society's political, and indeed non-political, institutions has its own political process or system, and the way in which these work can, and frequently does, affect the way in which the wider political system of the whole society operates.

At this point in your work on the block it should become clear that the study of government and politics is not concerned simply with something as remote as the Kremlin or even Whitehall and something as faceless as the Inland Revenue Department, it is something that concerns us all intimately and in which we are constantly involved. Indeed, one of the assignments permits you to use the general understanding provided in the block to investigate an immediate social situation of which you are a part.

From the start of this block you will see that government and politics are discussed at the level of comparative analysis. We are not seeking to understand or explain the situation in just one society, we are considering some of the generalised knowledge about this area of social activity. At the same time, you will find that the units draw on detailed examples and relate the categories and generalisations to specific societies, and in particular to the society of the United States. We have taken the United States as an example to which recurring reference is made. The obvious example to take might be thought to be the United Kingdom, but Britain is the focus of attention in a whole course at the second level (D/203 Decision Making in Britain) and at the foundation level there are merits in taking a relatively unfamiliar society. There are also two important positive reasons for taking the United States. It is a good example, in that it has been sufficiently studied for most aspects of government and politics to be illustrated with reference to it; and secondly, much writing in the field of political science presupposes a broad familiarity with government in the United States, and, in a measure, recent advances in the discipline have stemmed from the

situation in American political science. Thus an introduction to American government serves not only to exemplify and illustrate, it allows you to build up the sort of knowledge that is assumed in much that political scientists write, and thus helps you to understand them more clearly.

Here, then, is a brief summary of what the block says about government, but another objective of these units is to indicate something about the contribution of the social sciences, and particularly of political science, to our understanding of government. The aim, then, is to give an introduction to a discipline as well as to the governmental dimension of society.

Political Science and Related Disciplines

The objective of introducing a discipline is met in this block by providing a critical commentary on a major strand in the development of the discipline. The sequence of units serves the purpose not simply of introducing government in its different aspects, it also corresponds broadly speaking with a principal trend of development in the subject. Political science as a subject developed out of the study of philosophy and the study of law, and empirical political science was affected more by the study of law. In terms of areas of interest, the discipline has broadened its frame of reference, as do the units in this block, from a study of formal structures grounded in law, to include informal institutions and political culture, with, more recently, an emphasis on general empirical theory, such as that surrounding the model of a political system, in order to integrate the ideas and generalisations about the parts.

Political science, besides developing out of philosophy and law has also been characterised by its recent origin in West European and North American culture and by its long-standing preoccupation with government in Western Europe and North America. In this block, an additional way of providing a critical commentary on political science is the juxtaposition of the generalisations derived largely from the culture and experience of Western Europe and North America, with the conclusions that derive from the study of less complex governments and less formalised systems of politics. In so doing, attention is drawn to the absence of a clear boundary around the discipline of political science – in the same way as the units indicate that there are no firm boundaries around the governmental dimensions of society. Furthermore, the overlap between political science and sociology as disciplines is emphasised, and some attention is given to the connection also with social psychology in the first half of Unit 27. Less attention is given to the connections with other disciplines in the social sciences, due simply to lack of space and time, for the overlap with economics is just as considerable, and the previous unit on geo-politics has helped to indicate the links with geography.

Studying the Block

A discussion of ways of studying this block accompanies the study notes and ancillary material, but two words of introduction are appropriate here. First, you will be familiar with the point that this course narrative forms only one part of the study material for the block and its effective use depends on it being studied in association with the other components of the block. Secondly, those responsible for

preparing the block have assumed a particular relationship between the components, and thus that they will be studied in a particular way – that is, people will work at the components in a certain order and they will give more attention to reading and studying some parts than to others. Both these points are developed in the introduction to the study notes and it will be rewarding to consider these before proceeding with the study of the block, but some indication of the block as a whole can be gained from the list of contents on p. 10.

David J. Murray

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS (bound separately, and at present available only to Open University Students)

Self-assessment tests
Computer marked assignments
Tutor marked assignments
Radio notes
Television notes
Notes on the correspondence material
Reprint by McQuail, O'Sullivan and Quine
Reprint by Moodie and Eustace

THE SET BOOKS

Understanding Society.^{*} Readings in the Social Sciences edited by The Social Sciences Foundation Course Team. London, Macmillan (1970).

Government and Politics in the Twentieth Century by G. M. Carter and J. H. Herz. London, Thames and Hudson (1965).

An Introduction to American Government by E. L. Levine and E. E. Cornwell. London, Collier-Macmillan (1968).

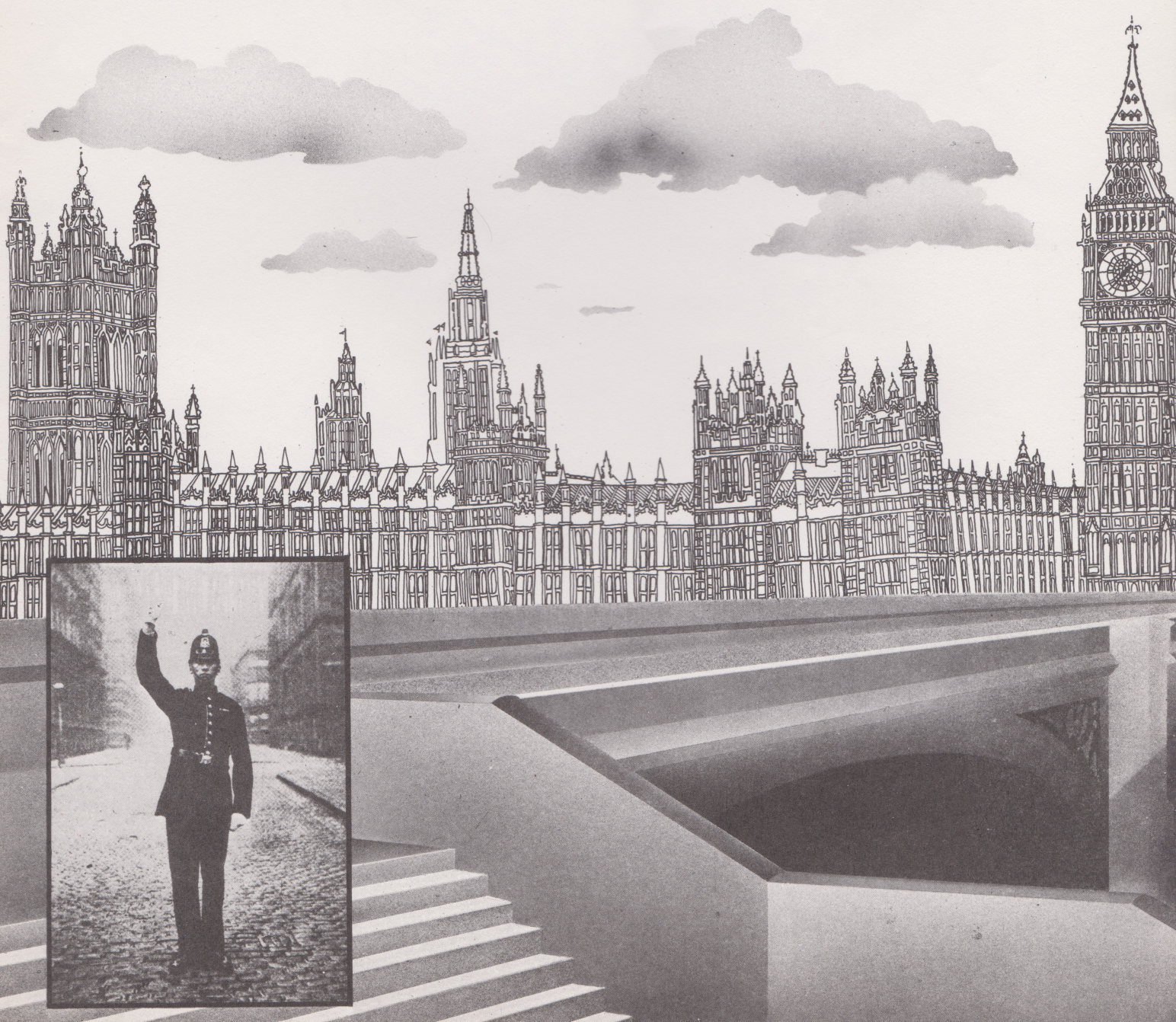
Introducing Sociology by P. Worsley. London, Penguin (1970).

^{*} Referred to in the text as the *Reader*.

Unit No.	Course narrative	Reader articles	Text book reading	Other reading	TV programme	Radio programme	Tutorial and assignment
	Introduction to Block	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	State, Nation and the Formal Structure of Government	R. A. Dahl, 'Political Systems: Differences' (Grade 1) G. Sartori, 'Constitutionalism: a Preliminary Discussion' (Grade 2)	G. M. Carter and J. H. Herz, Government and Politics in the Twentieth Century, 2nd ed. London, Thames and Hudson, 1965 pp. 19-23; 28-54; 64-77; 87-98 (Grade 2) E. L. Levine and E. E. Cornwell, An introduction to American Government, Collier-Macmillan 1968 pp. 135-52 (Grade 1)	Moodie and Eustace, British Universities as Political Systems	The Formal Structure of Government	Formal Structure of Government – the Rhodesian Constitutional Conflict	
25	Informal Political Institutions	S. Neumann, 'Towards a Comparative Study of Political Parties', pp. 440-48 (Grade 2) G. A. Almond, 'A Comparative Study of Interest Groups and the Political Process' (Grade 1)	Levine and Cornwell, <i>ibid.</i> (remainder) (Grade 2)		Informal Political Institutions: a case study in American politics (In two parts, each of 25 minutes)	Interest Groups: the Bane or Basis of Democracy	
26	Government and Politics Without the State	L. Mann, 'Queue Culture: The waiting line as a social system' (Grade 3) P. Bohannan, 'The Social and Political Organisation of the Tiv' (Grade 1) S. MacCallum, 'Dispute Settlement in an American Shopping Centre' (Grade 2)	P. Worsley, <i>Introducing Sociology</i> , Penguin, 1970, pp. 355-73 (Grade 2)		The Tiv of Nigeria: a stateless society	Observing Social Behaviour	Tutorial discussing and advising on assignment (see below)
27i	Political Culture	M. Weiner, 'Struggle Against Power: Notes on Indian Political Behaviour' (Grade 2) L. Lipsitz, 'Worklife and Political Attitudes: a study of manual workers' (Grade 3)	Carter and Herz, <i>ibid.</i> (remainder) (Grade 3)	McQuail, O'Sullivan and Quine, <i>Elite Education and Political Values</i>	Politics in Groups: university government	Political Socialisation – a research Project into the Attitudes of Schoolchildren	Computer-marked Assignment
27ii	Politics and Political Systems	D. Easton, 'An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems' (Grade 1)					
28	Politics in Groups	R. Michels, 'The Struggle Among the Leaders Themselves' (Grade 3) R. Frankenberg, 'The Politics of Recreation' pp. 533-50 (Grade 3)			A Structural Functional Approach to Political Systems	Feedback' programme	An investigation of either political socialisation or formal and informal political structures
	Conclusion Summer School	Participatory exercise, employing in particular material from Units 24 and 25					

Unit 24

The Formal Structure of Government



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THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

I THE STATE

In this unit we shall examine the state and the structure of government within the state, but before we can advance very far we have to face problems of definition. First, we must ask 'What is the state?' This is a difficult question, for 'the state' has meant different things both at different periods and to different people within the same period, and this variety of definition has rested on normative as well as empirical judgements. But having accepted the difficulties we can search for characteristics which distinguish the state. To do this we can start by looking to the past and noting some of the claims about the state in history.

I.1 The State in History

In Western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ruling dynasties often associated the state with their own person. It would be impossible to put the case more succinctly than Louis XIV of France who declared 'L'état c'est moi'. According to this



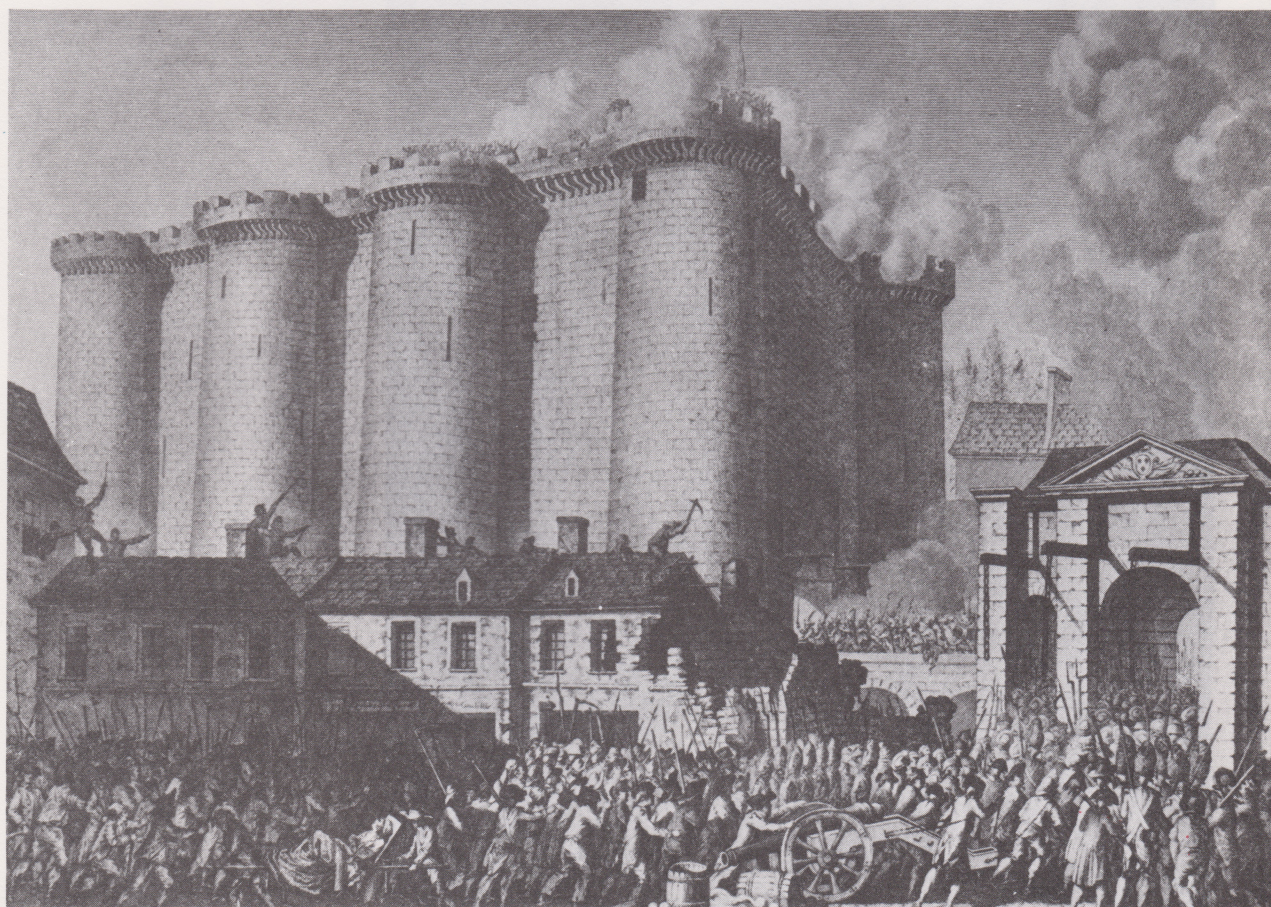
Figure 24.1 Louis XIV.

interpretation, the critical identifying characteristic of the state was not a geographical area or the group of people who were ruled – although both of these might incidentally be identifiable – the critical factor was the person of the monarch. Thus state units were created and destroyed according to the fortunes of the ruling dynasties. A successful marriage could enlarge the state as happened when Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile married and brought their two states together to form the basis of the new larger Spain. In Britain, England and Scotland were united by the succession of the Stuart dynasty, in the person of James VI of Scotland (James I of England), to the two thrones. Again a new larger state emerged.

The monarchs never had it all their own way. One of the challenges they constantly met was the claim that they were subject to the law which had its origin quite separate and apart from the monarch. The monarch, according to the claim, was not above the law, but was subject to the law and limited in what he could do. We discussed this view in Unit 2, p. 45, when we examined the Stuart monarch's claim to divine right in Britain.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, another and increasingly serious challenge to the monarchs came in the assertion of 'popular sovereignty'. This projected an ideal of the state existing in the will of the community as a whole, through general agreement on the state's aims and purposes, and through a legal system which rested on consent and consensus. This new sense of the state, which was symbolised in the French Revolution, became associated with the ideals of 'nationalism' and the nation-state. From this arose a whole spectrum of ideas, including those of Hegel which again were mentioned in Unit 2, pp. 51–2.

Figure 24.2 The Storming of the Bastille.



Even from this thumb-nail historical sketch three different views of the state emerge. It can be seen first as an entity deriving its identity from the person of the ruler, or second as a legal order laying down a pattern of relationships for all its members, or third as an association for the promotion of common purposes.

The main point to grasp is that 'the state' is not a fixed, static institution either in terms of what it *is* or what men think it *should be*. It is a social organisation and like other social organisations it has been, and continues to be, subject to change. To define the state involves an attempt to identify both an idea and a historical fact.

1.2 Three Major Claims of the State

If we turn to the state today, three of the distinguishing characteristics are: (1) its spatial identity; (2) the government's claims to internal sovereignty; (3) the claim to sovereignty in international relations.

1.2.1 THE STATE'S SPATIAL IDENTITY

The spatial identity of the state has already been discussed in Unit 23, pp. 15–28 where it was noted that the physical limits of the state are defined by boundaries, and where the evolution of these boundaries was discussed. To cross a boundary, whether it is a land boundary or the limits of territorial water or air space, is to enter a state. The state does not lose its identity if the rulers are changed or sections of the population move. For example, Greece as a state, remains Greece whether it is ruled by a King or by army colonels. Ruanda, the small African state, remains Ruanda, although the old ruling group, the Batutsi section of the population, have largely fled to other territories.

We accept the spatial identity of the state as a part of daily life. We accept that by crossing state boundaries individuals may dramatically change their status, as happens when a man seeks asylum, or when an aircraft inadvertently strays into the air space of an 'unfriendly' state.

To emphasise the fixed geographical identity of the state is not, of course, to imply that the geographical limits of any particular state are unchallenged. In Unit 23 mention was made of the long-standing disputes between India and China, and India and Pakistan over common boundaries (Fig. 23.14a). Also in that unit the exercise in European boundaries revealed a long history of disputed boundaries, with a state like Poland changing its shape quite dramatically during the centuries, pp. 28–32.

1.2.2 THE GOVERNMENT'S CLAIMS TO INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY

Within the territorial area of the state there exists a government. Whatever the form of the government, whether it be a republic, a military administration or whatever other form it may take, it claims sovereignty within the boundaries of the state. C. F. Strong (1966, p. 7) has defined 'sovereignty' as 'the supremacy of a person or body of persons in the state over the individual or association of individuals within the area of its jurisdiction'. While Carl Friedrich (1963, p. 550) the American scholar has spoken of 'the shorthand definition of the sovereign as "he who has the last word"', or, in the cumbrous language of nineteenth-century jurisprudence "he who is competent to determine his own competence".'

In the past the monarch claimed sovereignty in this country and so we still speak of the monarch as 'the sovereign'. In fact it is often difficult to decide where sovereignty lies and to try to overcome this some scholars have drawn a distinction between 'the legal sovereign' and the 'political sovereign'. Strong (1966, p. 7) describes the legal sovereign as 'the person or persons who, according to the law of the land, legislate and administer the government'. In Britain this would be the Queen in Parliament. In America it would be the President and the Congress. The 'political sovereign', according to Strong, is the body of persons in whom power ultimately resides, sometimes called the 'collective sovereign' and he says that in this country today the 'collective sovereign' is the electorate.

Plainly there are difficulties in giving these definitions of 'political sovereign' and 'collective sovereign' any sense of reality – in relating them to actual behaviour. Uwe Kitzinger made this point in writing about Britain and the European Economic Community (1967, p. 68). He argued that the subject of sovereignty had had relevance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it was 'A programme for domestic order, for pacification within and then protection from interference from without; but later it turned instead into a sanctification of the state as a law unto itself.' After asking 'who is the sovereign today?', Kitzinger dealt with the three most common claimants – the law, the parliament, and the people. He challenged each of these. The law he said only institutionalises decisions, it does not make them. The parliament is therefore circumscribed and this is an issue which will be examined later in the unit. Kitzinger also said that the claim that the people were supreme did not identify who took decisions nor did it reflect the restraints which were

Figure 24.3 The United Nations – each state claims sovereign international status.





The Emergence of New States.
 Figure 24.4a The Commonwealth 1946.
 L. to r. Mr. Walter Nash, New Zealand;
 Mr. J. B. Chifley, Australia; C. R. Attlee,
 United Kingdom; General Smuts, South
 Africa. No representative from Canada is in
 the picture.



Figure 24.4b The Commonwealth 1971,
 meeting at Singapore.

placed on any group and even a majority. He concluded, 'So who is the sovereign now? Or isn't it rather that in this modern world there just is not *anyone* who has the supreme power of decision, independent of anyone else's power of decision, off with his head? Our whole democratic system is a complicated, constantly shifting, purely momentary equilibrium of different forces, operating in different ways in different sectors, a gigantic multi-dimensional jigsaw puzzle of interlocking directorates which makes the fifth-form school textbook theory of how British Government works, makes even the federal division of responsibility of the United States Constitution look child's play by comparison.' (1967, p. 69.)

1.2.3 THE CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

There is another dimension of 'sovereignty' which leads us to a third characteristic of the state. This is the claim to sovereignty in international relations. The governments within the states each

claim the right to reach agreements, and undertake obligations on behalf of the people who live within their state and bind them to undertakings and obligations towards other states. Each state claims equality in exercising its sovereign international rights.

The emphasis on this claim to equal international status has probably grown in the post-war years with the emergence of a large number of new states which have emerged from the old European empires. Many of these new states have been weak and economically underdeveloped but their claim to equal status in international relations has been clear and unambiguous.

1.3 The Comprehensive View of the State

The characteristics we have noted for the state are first its spatial identity, second the existence of a government claiming internal sovereignty and third the claim to equal international status. In everyday speech we often emphasise different characteristics of the state. For example, when we speak of crossing a state's boundaries, we are emphasising the spatial aspect, and when we speak of 'the state' taking over an industry or providing more social services, we are emphasising the governmental aspect. A comprehensive view of the state must try to embrace all aspects. But the earlier warning must be repeated that no definition of the state is entirely satisfactory, and to add further to our difficulties, there are words like 'country' and 'nation' which we all use, often without being clear whether we mean the same things as the state. We shall return to an examination of 'the nation' later.

1.4 The Challenge to the State

We have noted that states have been subject to continuing change and challenge and this is still true today. Government leaders may try to stress the inviolability of the existing state structure but the modern state is no more sacrosanct than any previous state. We can see this by developing further some of the challenges.

One source of challenge is not a challenge to the premises on which the modern state is built but the desire to see a change within the existing structure – perhaps an amendment to the geographical boundaries, or a change within the organisation or the personnel of its government. For example, within the United Kingdom, Welsh and Scottish Nationalists would like to see parts of the existing state break away to form separate new states. But these new states would, as states, have similar characteristics to the existing United Kingdom. Equally, in Ireland, the supporters of one Irish state which would embrace the North and the South, are not suggesting a new form of state, but the transfer of a part of one state to another. In Rhodesia, the African Nationalists are not suggesting that Rhodesia should disappear,¹ but that they should take over the government.

The second challenge comes from those who question the basis of the state. Among these challenges we noted those of Marx and Engels in Unit 2, pp. 55–6. They suggested that the state was built on class antagonism and that once this antagonism disappeared so the state would wither away. So far there has been no evidence to suggest that the state is withering away under communism and communist states continue to make similar claims to other states.

1 They would like to rename it 'Zimbabwe' but that is a separate issue.

Another challenge comes from the supporters of supra-national organisations. For example, it can be argued that the European Economic Community is breaking down the existing state system by inducing West European states to abandon their claims to exclusive sovereignty and to accept the pooled decisions of the community. As the future course of the EEC is uncertain, it can be argued against this that even if the members abandon claims to their own individual sovereignty the EEC could emerge as a new European state.

Writers who argue that international politics cannot be seen as the interaction of separate, individual states criticise what they call 'the billiard ball image'. This is an image in which each state is seen as a separate unit with a clearly marked and defined exterior which makes contact with the exteriors of similar units. The critics of this view would argue that the state is only one actor in international politics and that there are other equally important actors, like international firms and international organisations. They could quote examples in which the governments of states had been forced by international business interests to take steps that they would not have chosen to take. Andrew M. Scott (1967) also criticised the view of the state as a separate entity when he wrote (pp. 18-19):

Nation-states no longer provide the only source of authority in the nation-state system. International organisations and regional groupings, by their existence and their actions, provide new forms of authority. Under some conditions these newer forms of authority may conflict with authority deriving from nation-states.

... Nations today are not sovereign, in the meaningful sense of that term, are not self-contained, and are not impermeable. This statement is true for all nations but is startlingly apparent in the case of the newer 'incubator' nations, which need assistance almost from the moment of their birth.

If we attempt to relate some of the challenges to particular cases we can see that claims to statehood based on the three criteria we used earlier – spatial identity, a sovereign government and international status – may be very questionable. In Western Europe, for example, most states like France, Denmark, Holland, appear to satisfy the three criteria of statehood, but what of West Germany? Does it form a separate state from East Germany, and what are the implications of its failure to gain universal international recognition? If we move into Eastern Europe, we find equal difficulties. Can Hungary and Czechoslovakia be classified as sovereign states after they have been subjected to Russian invasion when they tried to take an independent stand? But to take an extreme case we can move out of Europe to South Vietnam where all three of the criteria were in doubt during the 1960s. The spatial identity of South Vietnam was challenged first by those who claimed that all Vietnam was one country and therefore the South could not stand alone, and second even within the claimed boundaries of South Vietnam there were large areas which were controlled by the Vietcong and not by the South Vietnam government. That government's claims to internal sovereignty and international status were also open to doubt because of its very heavy reliance on American aid and support. In such circumstances could South Vietnam be called a state?

2 THE NATION

In the quotations from Scott, you will see that he writes of 'the nation-state', while we have mainly spoken of 'the state'. It is in fact

very common to bracket 'nation' and 'state' together, as we saw in Unit 2 when we looked at Hegel, but if we do this we should be clear of the implications. We have to ask – are 'nation' and 'state' synonymous? Some definitions would make them virtually synonymous but here in this unit we shall draw a distinction.

2.1 Nationalism as a Form of Self-identification

As 'the state' is associated with a geographical area and a government structure, so 'the nation' is associated with people. Again, like other social groups, no nation is fixed and static, for a sense of belonging to a nation is a form of self-identification and this identification can change over periods and according to circumstances. For example, in an Italian family which emigrates to Australia the parents may continue to see themselves as Italians, while their children might well grow up saying they are Australians. The cases of countries like Australia and America, which have been built up by large-scale immigration, provide obvious examples of changes in self-identification, but even if we turn to long-established nations like the British and the French, there are a great range of people who have come together to make up these nations in the past, and the process of assimilation of immigrants, and of challenge from people like Scotch and Welsh nationalists still continues.

2.2 Nationalism Seeking Expression in the Sovereign State

Nations do not always coincide with states. A nation may overlap state boundaries as the Germans did in 1938, and a nation may move as the Poles and the Jews have moved.

In the nineteenth century and stretching on into this century there was strong support for the ideal that each nation should be recognised as a state. It was a thread that ran through Gladstonian Liberal attitudes to central Europe, and Woodrow Wilson's aims at the Versailles Conference when Europe was re-ordered after the First World War. It was a game of 'Find the Nation' and having found the nation draw boundaries around it and recognise it as a nation-state. The drive for nationalism to statehood, which was accepted as the basis of this ideal, has been expressed by Hans Kohn (1945) in his book *The Idea of Nationalism* in which he wrote (pp. 18–19):

Nationalism is a state of mind. The process of history can be analyzed as a succession of changes in communal psychology, in the attitude of man towards all manifestations of individual and social life. Such factors as language, territory, traditions – such sentiments as attachment to the native soil, the 'Heimat', and to one's kin and kind – assume different positions in the scale of values as communal psychology changes. Nationalism is an idea, an *idée-force*, which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and new sentiments, and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organized action. Nationality is therefore not only a group held together and animated by common consciousness, but it is also a group seeking to find its expression in what it regards as the highest form of organized activity, a sovereign state. As long as a nationality is not able to attain this consummation, it satisfies itself with some form of autocracy or pre-state organization, which, however, always tends at a given moment, the moment of 'liberation', to develop into a sovereign state. Nationalism demands the nation-state; the creation of the nation-state strengthens nationalism. Here as elsewhere in history, we find a continuous interdependence and integration.

2.3 Three Attempts to Create the Nation-state

The ideal of realising nationalism in statehood is still strong but the difficulty of realisation has been demonstrated time after time. Look for example at the Versailles settlement of 1919 which aimed at identifying nations and then drawing boundaries around them to create nation-states. It was found that trying to implement this ideal was very difficult indeed. How could lines be drawn between the Germans and the Poles, the Germans and the Austrians when in broad frontier zones they lived intermixed? There were pockets of Germans among the Poles and pockets of Poles among the Germans. In fact, the Versailles settlement failed to eliminate the problem of national minority groups in Central Europe, as the division of Ireland has failed to eliminate the problem of religious minorities there.

An alternative to identifying the area of a particular nation and then drawing boundaries around it is for the people of a nation to move together so that as a tight group they form a nation-state. The most spectacular attempt at this has been made by the Jews.

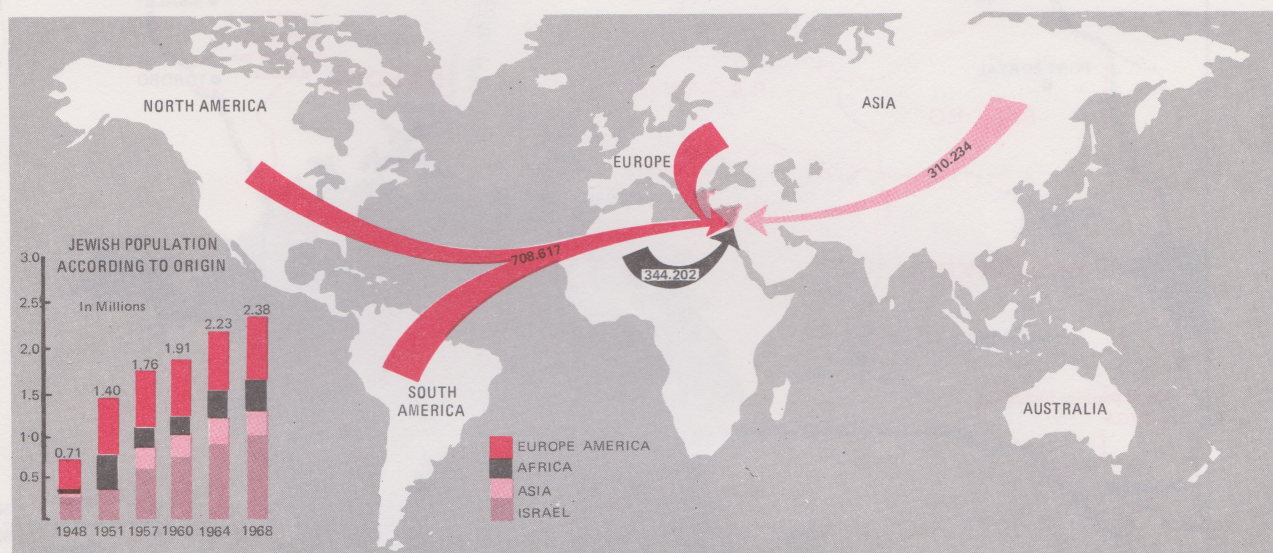


Figure 24.5 Jewish Immigration to Israel.

The creation of the state of Israel is a concerted attempt to bring the Jewish nation together in one state. The story of its partial success and the continuing claims of the Arab Palestinians are too well-known to need repeating.

A third approach to the building of the nation-state is for the government to build up a sense of nationalism within the state. This is what the leaders of many African states have set out to do, for they have inherited states in which there is no single predominant national sentiment. In contrast to Kohn's view above they have set out to build a new nationalism based upon loyalty to the state. Dr. Kenneth Kaunda repeatedly calls for 'One nation, one people, one Zambia', not because this exists, but because he is trying to create it.

The action of the African leaders supports Carl Friedrich's (1963, pp. 547-8) claim that: 'typically the building of the state comes first, and it is within the political framework of the state that the nation comes into being, or at any rate to fruition.' In the Western states, the linkage of nation and state has, says Friedrich become so strong that we ask, 'How can these new states succeed when there does not exist any nation to support it? But was there a

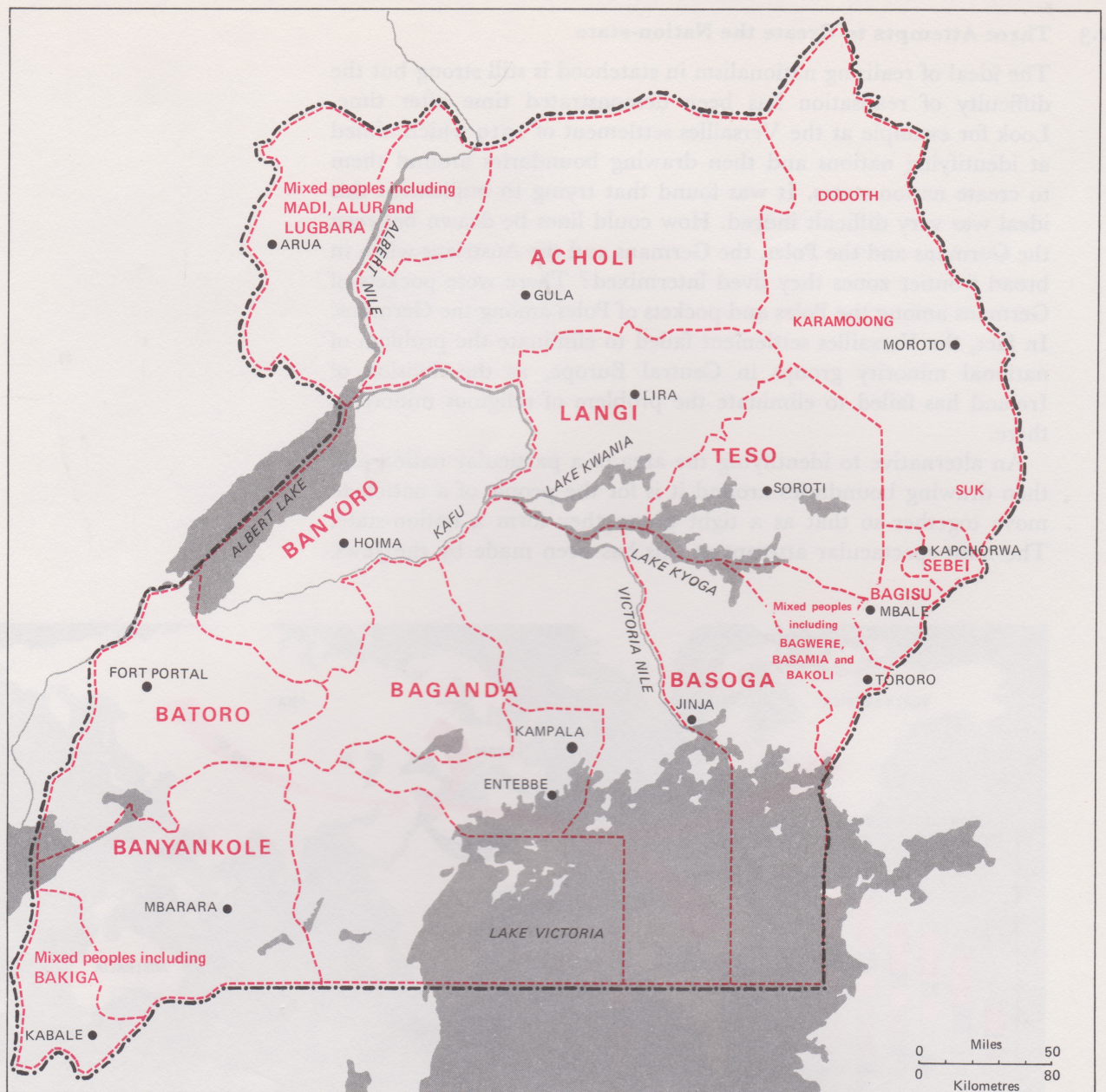


Figure 24.6 Building the Nation-State in Uganda. The state and district boundaries are marked and within these are shown the main peoples ('tribes') of Uganda. District boundaries often coincide with the major groupings of people, each having their own distinct language.

British, or a French, or an American, or even a Swiss nation, when the respective states came into being?' Friedrich's emphasis is on the rulers of the state building up the sense of nationhood to reinforce the state. The attractions for the rulers are obvious, for it will increase their legitimacy and the consensus within the state. But care must be taken with Friedrich's analysis, for, as he himself notes, it does not explain how a sense of being 'German' grew up before there was a German state, or how a sense of belonging to a Jewish nation persisted in the absence of a state, or how different and sometimes conflicting national identities continued to exist in multi-national states like Belgium and South Africa.

The three attempts we have noted to bring 'state' and 'nation' together are:

- 1 An attempt to 'find' a particular nation and then to give it a physical identity by drawing state boundaries around it, as happened at the Versailles Settlement of 1919.
- 2 An attempt to move a nation to a selected area where it would then form a separate state. Israel was used as an example here.

- 3 An attempt to build a sense of nationalism within a state which originally has no single national identity, as is happening in black Africa.

3 THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

The government within each state has a formal structure. This consists of authoritatively described offices and institutions and the relationships which exist between them. The study of the formal structure has captured scholars' attention since the time of the early Greeks. The example which is usually cited is the Greek scholar Aristotle who studied and classified the formal structures of government of his day. The interest which Aristotle and those who have followed him have shown is easy to understand for the formal structure mainly concerns the public and easily discernible aspects of government. It is concerned with such questions as, 'Has the state a monarch and if so what are his powers?', 'Is there an elected Parliament, and if so how is it elected?'

From these questions developed the study of 'political institutions' such as legislatures, judiciaries, executives and bureaucracies, and while political science has now widened its horizons to study a range of organisations and behaviour outside these institutions of the formal structure, this does not imply that the formal structure can be ignored. In all states some organisation of authoritative roles, some accepted method of processing government business is necessary. There has to be an accepted pattern of dealing with the business

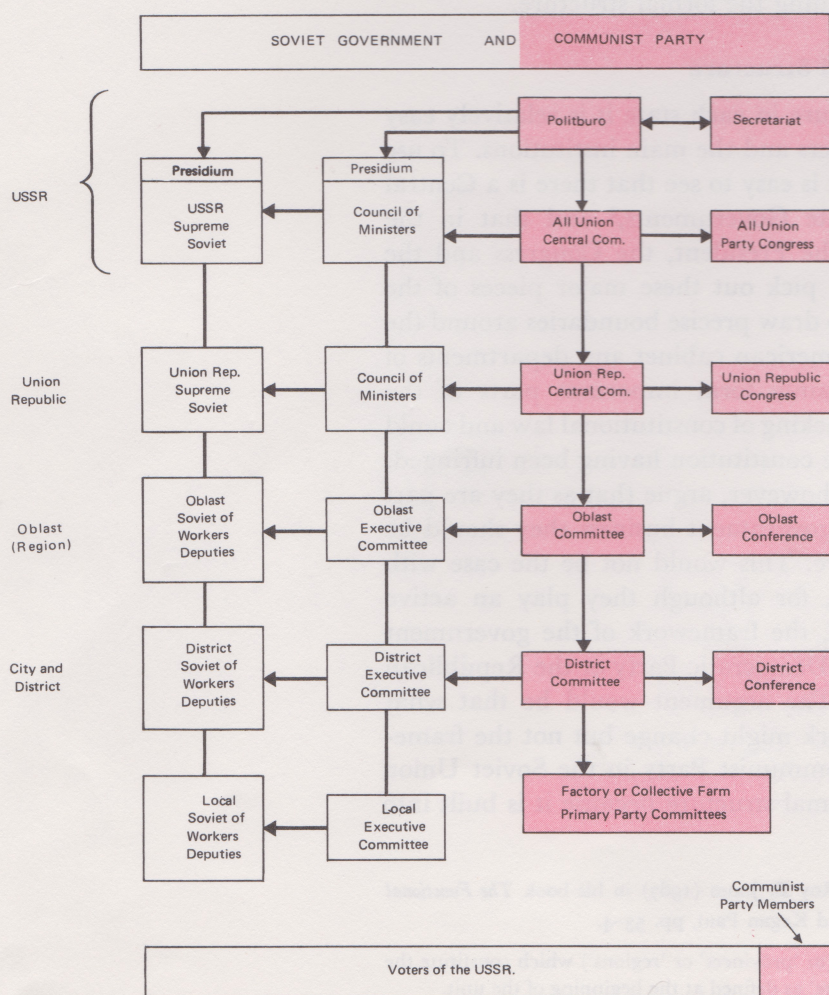


Figure 24.7 Simplified diagram of the formal structure of government in the U.S.S.R.

for otherwise every issue which was raised would involve a debate about who should deal with it and what procedure should be used. Equally, when an issue is decided, there has to be a known procedure for confirming it, for communicating it and for ensuring that it is carried out, or again this would be in dispute.¹ The formal structure provides the framework for those activities.

The formal structure usually has a legal foundation. The law which deals with the offices and institutions in the formal structure is sometimes separately identified as 'constitutional law' and given a higher status than other law. It is often more difficult to amend constitutional law than other law and special procedures are laid down for making amendments. For example, if you look at the American Constitution, which is printed at the back of Levine and Cornwell's (1968) book, you will see there that the procedure for amending the Constitution is detailed in a separate section – Article V.

The distinction that is sometimes drawn between constitutional law and other law may give an impression that the formal structure of government and the functions it performs can be set apart from other government and political processes. This is patently not the case. The formal structure may have a 'special' status but it cannot be divorced from other government activities. Yet, for our purposes, in building up our knowledge of government step by step, we are going to analyse it separately. In doing this we should recognise that we are making an artificial distinction and even in this unit we shall sometimes break out of the confines of the formal structure, while in a later unit (28) an attempt will be made to relate together the whole political system including the formal structure.

3.1 The Framework of the Formal Structure

In identifying the formal structure in each state it is relatively easy to pick out the main office holders and the main institutions. To use the American example again, it is easy to see that there is a Central Government and separate State Governments,² and that in the Central Government there is the President, the Congress and the Courts. But while it is easy to pick out these major pieces of the structure, it is always difficult to draw precise boundaries around the formal structure. Should the American cabinet and departments of state be included? They certainly form important parts of the government but they have no backing of constitutional law and could disappear overnight without the constitution having been infringed. Most political scientists would, however, argue that as they are part of the structure for processing government business they should be included in the formal structure. This would not be the case with the American political parties, for although they play an active part in American Government, the framework of the government would remain intact even if the Democratic Party or the Republican Party disappeared overnight. The argument would be that what takes place within the framework might change but not the framework itself. In contrast, the Communist Party in the Soviet Union could be seen as part of the formal structure because it is built into

1 This point is made very clearly by Roy E. Jones (1967) in his book *The Functional Analysis of Politics*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 53-4.

2 N.B. In a federal structure the states (or 'provinces' or 'regions') which constitute the federation are quite distinct from 'the state' as defined at the beginning of the unit.

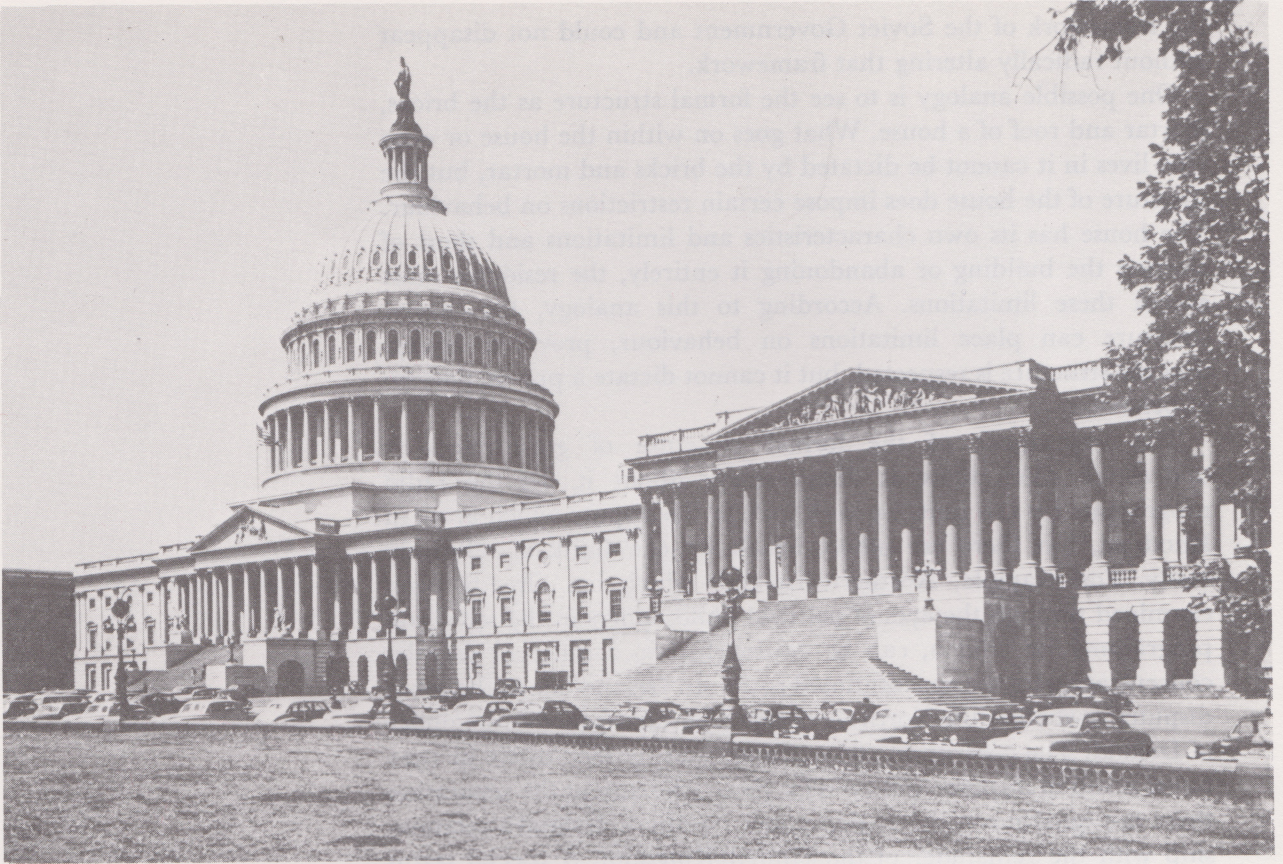
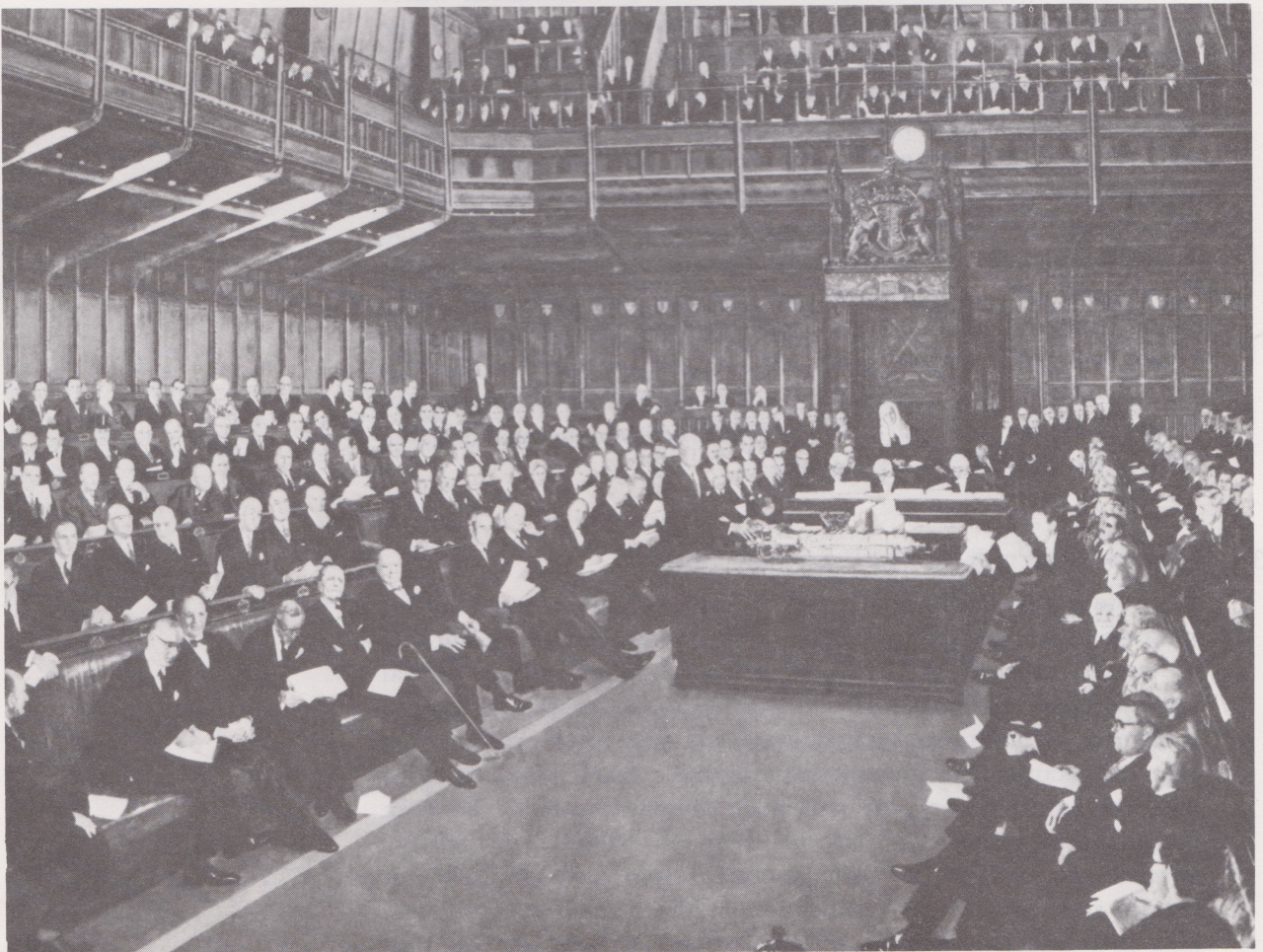


Figure 24.8a (above) *The Capitol, Washington.*

Figure 24.8b (below) *The House of Commons in session.*



the framework of the Soviet Government and could not disappear without radically altering that framework.

One possible analogy is to see the formal structure as the bricks, mortar and roof of a house. What goes on within the house or even who lives in it cannot be dictated by the bricks and mortar, but the structure of the house does impose certain restrictions on behaviour. The house has its own characteristics and limitations and short of altering the building or abandoning it entirely, the residents must accept these limitations. According to this analogy, the formal structure can place limitations on behaviour, provided always that the structure is respected, but it cannot dictate a precise pattern of behaviour.

The importance of the formal structure of government is underlined when there is disagreement about it. In the radio programme for this unit, we shall look at the dispute which arose in Rhodesia, but there are others which we can think of relatively easily. For example, Northern Ireland, which has already been examined through the eyes of political philosophers in the television programme for Unit 2, can be approached in a different way by concentrating on the constitutional issues. In Ireland one of the great disputes is whether the North should be separated from the remainder of Ireland. The constitutional separation was, in fact, made in 1921 but it is still in dispute, and even for those who accept the separation there are questions to be settled about Northern Ireland's relationship with the remainder of the United Kingdom. A special status was created in which Northern Ireland was designated a Province with its own Parliament – the Stormont, to handle internal affairs. But Northern Ireland continues to send MPs to Westminster where 'sovereignty' over the Province still lies. This was made plain in the troubles of the late 1960s, when because the Northern Ireland Government was unable to maintain law and order unaided, the government at Westminster sent in troops to try to bring the situation under control. Some of these troubles sprang from disputes about the formal structure. First, there were continuing questions about the division of Ireland, and second there was criticism of the local council franchise arrangements by people like the Civil Rights Movement. They complained that electoral boundaries had been 'gerrymandered' to favour the ruling Unionist Party and that the franchise, which was based on rate paying, operated to deprive Roman Catholics of voting rights. (For elections to Stormont and Westminster the principle of universal suffrage was operated as in the remainder of the United Kingdom.)

3.2 Classification of States by Formal Structure

Each state has a different formal structure of government, but for most states it is possible to classify them, at least roughly, according to similar characteristics. Classification is important for several reasons. First, without some form of classification we should have to treat each structure as being unique and start from scratch each time we examined a government. Second, classification helps us with comparative work. We can make comparisons either between broad classifications, for example between federal and unitary governments, or within a particular classification, say within different federal systems. Third, classification of the formal structure can help us in understanding the informal structure. For example, if we

are trying to analyse the behaviour of pressure groups, it will probably help if we already understand some of the characteristics of the formal structure of government in which the pressure groups work. For example, it might be claimed that one of the features which distinguishes the activities of pressure groups in Canada from those in the United States is that those in Canada have to work within a parliamentary system while the Americans operate within a Presidential system.

There are, of course, a variety of ways in which we can classify government structures. In your *Reader* you will find an extract from Robert Dahl's (1963) book *Modern Political Systems* in which he explains that a geographer and a lawyer would look for different characteristics in government and so make different classifications. But he also stresses that even among political scientists there are many different forms of classification. The classification depends upon the criteria which are used and so when the criteria change, so does the basis of the classification. Among the classifications are:

- 1 The distribution of power between the central government, and state, regional or local governments. (Example of classification – *unitary, federal*). This will be discussed further below.
- 2 The nature of the government institutions. (Example of classification – *Presidential and Parliamentary*.) You can find reference to this in Carter and Herz (1965), Chapter III.
- 3 The basis of sovereignty within the state. (Example of classification – *limited, unlimited, government*.) This will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 'Limited' and 'Autocratic' (or 'Unlimited') Government

In the *Reader* (pp. 428–39) there is an article by Giovanni Sartori in which he discusses constitutionalism. Sartori draws a clear distinction between two meanings which have been given to 'constitution'. By using one of these meanings we can say that all states have a constitution. In this instance a constitution means a 'plan' or a 'frame' of government. Sartori writes that by this definition 'any "frame of government" amounted to a constitution'. But then he emphasises that there is another definition of constitution. In this second definition a constitution not only provides a frame of government but also has devices to limit the powers of the rulers, such as a 'bill of rights'. Such a constitution (a) lays down a plan of government and, (b) sets limits on what can be done by rulers. Sartori argues that there has been ambiguity in the past because the distinction has not been made and 'constitution' has had to carry both meanings. 'Thus', he writes (p. 430) 'generation after generation, European public law went ahead riding simultaneously two horses: the constitution as any "State order", and constitutionalism as a specific "content" of guarantees'. Sartori himself settles for the second definition of constitution which has the two elements – the plan and the limitation. His definition (p. 434) of 'constitution' is – 'a frame of political society, organised through and by the law, for the purpose of restraining arbitrary power.'

Sartori has drawn for us an important distinction between governments which are 'limited' by a constitution and autocratic or 'unlimited' governments which have no such limitation. Of course 'unlimited' here has a particular meaning related to the constitution. It does not imply that a government may not face

other limitations and checks. For example a ruler who has no apparent constitutional limitations may be limited by his realisation that the army will move against him if he behaves in a particular way, or he may be limited by the sheer inefficiency of the machinery of government.

To return to Sartori and the constitution. He draws attention to the way a constitution is designed. He quotes, as an example, the Constitution of Pennsylvania of 1776 which had both a plan of government and a bill of rights. The Pennsylvania example is characteristic of many constitutions designed in Western states in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They had built into them the ideals of limited government – such ideals as respect for individual freedoms, government responding to majority opinion and checking devices within the government – and these same ideals have reappeared in this century, in the design of constitutions for the new states which have emerged from the old colonial empires.

While the design of the constitution is important, we must also note the way a constitution is used. There are many cases in which a constitution designed to limit the government has been ignored or distorted so that the limitations have not been effective. An example of this is mentioned in the radio programme on Rhodesia. In the Rhodesian 1961 constitution there was a Declaration of Rights which was designed, among other things, to ensure that there would be no imprisonment without trial, but the government circumvented this by introducing emergency legislation (Barber 1967, p. 73 and p. 268). Rhodesia is only one among many examples which could be drawn from 'old' and 'new' states to demonstrate that the limiting elements in a constitution have either been ignored or have been dispensed with entirely. What remains in these cases is what Sartori would call 'a frame' of government and no more.

3.4 'Goals' and Values within the Constitutional Framework

We in the Western states usually lay great emphasis on the law and the constitution, as defined by Sartori, limiting the government's activity. But this view has normative implications which are not universally shared. In totalitarian states, as you will discover in reading Carter and Herz (1965), governments would not accept that they should be shackled and contained by a constitution. In this case the ideal is not that the government should be restricted and checked but that it should be out in front leading. An example should emphasise the point. In America during the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt took steps to counter the economic depression by government action. On reference to the Supreme Court, it was held that some of these actions were unconstitutional. Although he continued to think that the actions were desirable, Roosevelt accepted the constitutional limits imposed on him. Contrast this with what we may imagine as Stalin's attitude if he had faced constitutional limitations in forcing through the collectivisation of Russian agriculture. Unlike an American President, he would have thought it quite wrong that his policies should have to give way to constitutional restraints.

Professor Blondel (1969) has drawn similar distinctions by emphasising the 'goals' or aims of government. First, he makes the obvious points that different governments have different goals, and that among governments with similar goals there will be differences of emphasis. Blondel then goes on to distinguish three very broad

goals of government. First, a goal related to who can participate in government. Second, a goal related to the preservation of a particular procedure or method of carrying out government business. And, third, a major goal concerned with the achievement of particular policies.

Governments do not usually pursue any one of these goals exclusively. In fact, almost all governments are pursuing the three goals simultaneously, but a clear distinction comes out in the emphasis which is given to each of them. For example, although the Rhodesian government of Ian Smith is concerned about the second and third goals (i.e. it pursues policies which it hopes will bring economic development, and it is concerned that the constitution it has introduced will be universally accepted) it has given priority to the first goal – who participates in government. Mr. Smith and his fellows were prepared to overthrow a constitution and to endure economic sanctions so that whites could continue to rule. The earlier Roosevelt example is a good indication that in the United States great emphasis is usually placed on acting within the constitution (goal two). This does not imply that the Americans do not have goals related to participation or policy achievement, but simply that they aim to achieve these goals within the limitations imposed by the second goal. In contrast, Stalin, with his confident assertion of government leadership, placed greatest emphasis upon the achievement of particular policies, and if the procedure of government (goal two) stood in the way, it was brushed aside. It could also be claimed that Stalin was greatly concerned with ‘participation’ in restricting control to himself or a small group which was subordinate to him.

The three goals of government, as identified by Blondel, also help to explain why similar institutions will be treated and perform in different ways. This has been especially noticeable over the past two decades in the transference of European government institutions to ex-colonial territories. In most ex-British territories parliamentary forms of government based on the Westminster model were chosen, but the model has changed its shape under different circumstances. One obvious example of this is the way that the competing party pattern has often given way to the single party. In explaining this the leaders of the one-party states have claimed that this increases participation in government (goal one) because everybody is associated with the ruling party and that it makes it very much easier to implement policies (goal three).

3.5 Subdivision of Autocratic Governments

We have drawn a very broad distinction between ‘limited’ and ‘autocratic’ government. Under both of these heads many subdivisions can be drawn. Among autocratic governments, there are, for example, monarchies (as opposed to ‘constitutional monarchies’), totalitarian states and military dictatorships. We shall concentrate our main attention on ‘limited’ governments, but you can read about totalitarian states in Carter and Herz (1965, Chapter II), and we should note in passing that it would be a distortion to regard ‘limited’ government as a universal norm with ‘autocratic’ government as an aberration. Living in Britain, there may be a temptation to think that ‘limited’ government is both the ‘usual’ form of government and the ‘best’ form of government. The first of these claims is a questionable empirical judgement, the second is plainly

a normative one. In fact, many past and existing governments would fall under our classification of 'autocratic'. If you have time, try as an exercise to note the number of states under some form of military rule. When you have done this, you may start to think that military rule is the norm!

3.6 Constitutional Means of Limiting the Government

We shall now concentrate our attention on 'limited' government and in doing this we can first note that constitutional limitations may be placed on governments in one or more of the following four ways:

- 1 By restricting the area in which the government can legitimately act.
- 2 By distributing power through various institutions and using the institutions to check each other.
- 3 By dividing sovereign authority between governments.
- 4 By requiring the government to seek re-election.

3.7 Restricting the Area of Government Activity

A bill of rights is a good example of the way the area of government activity may be restricted. The aim is to spell out an area of 'negative liberty' (Unit 2, p. 49) – of individual rights (such as freedom of worship or freedom from imprisonment without trial) which the government may not touch. If you look at Section 9 of the American Constitution, you can see such limitations laid on the government there, and Carter and Herz (1965) discuss this issue on pp. 67–77.

Governments may be restricted in areas other than those of individual rights. For example, in the 1961 constitution of Southern Rhodesia, limitations were placed on the government's powers in relation to land holding. The division of land between the races has been one of the most controversial issues in Rhodesian politics and a whole

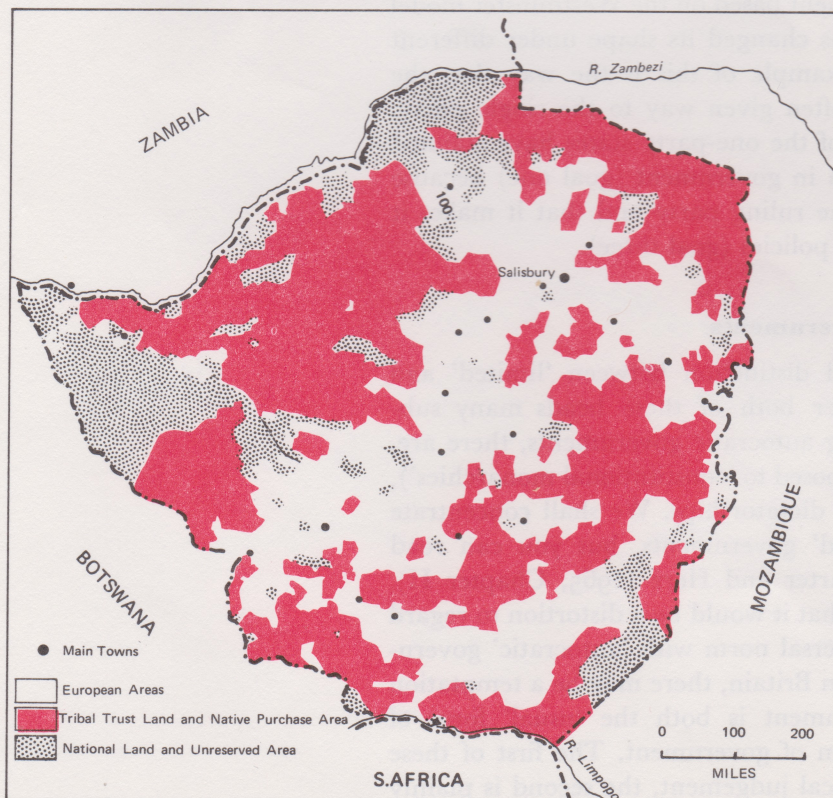


Figure 24.9 Rhodesia, showing racial apportionment of land at time of 1961 constitution.

chapter of the constitution was concerned with detailing the position of the 'Tribal Trust Lands' (i.e. African lands), outlining the way in which these lands were to be administered, and placing restrictions on the government's powers to interfere with these lands.

3.8 The Distribution of Powers

The limiting feature in this case is that the various sections of the government have defined powers to counter the possibility of all government powers falling into one set of hands. In this category would come 'the separation of powers' which is a distinctive feature of the American Constitution. As mentioned in the television programme there is a conscious attempt in the Constitution to divide the powers of government between three major arms – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. If you look at the Constitution, you will see that each of the three arms of government is given a section to itself. You need only read the first few sentences of Articles I, II and III to appreciate this.

The American Constitution is an example of the 'classical' division of powers. In this division, the three arms of government are distinguished as:

The Legislature to make and amend laws and to lay down rules of conduct.

The Executive to carry out the laws and conduct the day-to-day activities of the government within the framework of the laws.

The Judiciary to interpret the laws, which it does by adjudicating disputes and deciding what acts are permitted, required, or forbidden by the law.

Another point that is made in the television programme is that while within the American Constitution there is this separation of powers, in practice there is considerable overlapping between the various parts in carrying out the functions of government. But the practice does not remove the constitutional limitations – such as the need for Congressional approval for legislation, and the role of the judiciary in deciding whether there has been a breach of the constitution.

3.9 Dividing Sovereign Authority Between Governments – Unitary and Federal Structures of Government¹

Formal divisions of authority are also common on a vertical dimension. All states are either unitary or federal in their formal structure.

A state with a *unitary* constitution is one where 'the legislature of the whole country is the supreme law-making body in the country. It may permit other legislatures to exist and to exercise their powers, but it has the right in law to overrule them; they are subordinate to it.' (Wheare, 1966, p. 19). A state with a *federal* constitution is one where '(1) two levels of government rule the same land and people, (2) each level has at least one area of action in which it is autonomous, and (3) there is some guarantee (even though merely a statement in the constitution) of the autonomy of each government in its own sphere.' (Riker, 1964, p. 11).

An example of a unitary state is the United Kingdom. The

¹ Dr. David Potter, Senior Lecturer in Government at the Open University, has contributed extensively in this section.

Parliament at Westminster is the supreme law-making body so that local governments, including the government of Northern Ireland, have their powers granted to them by Westminster. All these powers can legally be withdrawn, although in practice this is highly unlikely. Even in a unitary state there is usually some competition between the central and the local authorities over the use and demarcation of their powers. An example of such competition in the United Kingdom is the controversy over the reform of secondary education. First the controversy was between the Labour Government and some Conservative local authorities, and then when a Conservative Government came into power between it and Labour controlled local authorities. Such competition, however, does not infringe the formal-legal position, in which the legislature in Westminster is the supreme law-making body in the country.

India is an example of a federal state. The Indian constitution distinguishes clearly between (a) those matters on which only the central government can legislate, (b) those matters on which only the state governments can legislate and (c) those matters on which both the central and state governments may legislate concurrently. The sections of the constitution dealing with these divisions of power can only be amended by special procedures in which the state governments have a major voice. What follows from this type of political struggle is that the central government is formally powerless to act in those matters on which state governments have jurisdiction. For example, according to the constitution, land tenure in rural India is the responsibility of state governments. The central government in New Delhi has issued directives regarding the importance of implementing an aggressive programme of land reform but some states have not passed the legislation required to implement such directives. In this example, the state governments have thereby demonstrated their autonomy vis-à-vis the central government.

Although there are considerable differences among federal states more than half of the land mass of the world is ruled today by states which can be classified as federal. The main examples are:

NORTH AMERICA: Canada, Mexico, the United States of America.

SOUTH AMERICA: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela.

EUROPE: Austria, the Soviet Union, Switzerland, West Germany, Yugoslavia.

ASIA: India, Malaysia, Pakistan.

AFRICA: Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria.

AUSTRALASIA: Australia.

All but two of these governments are creations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The exceptions are the Swiss Federation, which is mediaeval in origin, and the United States of America, which was formed in the late eighteenth century. We may adduce therefore that most federations are fairly recent in origin, and we may also adduce, by examining the list above, that many are large, both in terms of area and in terms of the size of their populations.

Why are they large and new? An answer to this interesting question would require an analysis of the origins of federal states, an analysis which would quickly take us beyond the bounds of this unit. It must suffice to say that the formation of a federal state is usually the result of a bargain struck between smaller political units, such as ex-colonies, which agree to give up some independence

in exchange for the advantages they see in being part of a larger union. The result of this bargain is then recorded in a constitution, agreed to by all units forming the union. This legal enactment, subsequently binding on all constituent units, specifies among other things the powers granted to the central government and the powers reserved to the constituent units. By such a technique large areas can be aggregated under one government without resort to force. Most governments historically have sought to extend their area of control as far as existing technology and neighbouring governments permit. Previously this was done by military conquest and/or the device known as imperialism. As empires have crumbled or been broken up – Spain in Latin America in the nineteenth century, other European countries in Asia, and Africa in the twentieth – some newly-independent colonies and countries have found it advantageous to form federal unions the better to levy taxes, or to raise armies, or to create other economies of scale. It is in view of these considerations that it has been said that federalism ‘avoids the offensiveness of imperial control’ and is today ‘the main alternative to empire as a technique of aggregating large areas under one government’. (Riker, 1964, p. 5).

Very briefly then, these observations regarding origin suggest some of the reasons why federal governments are large and historically quite recent in origin. They also suggest why federal structures of government take the form they do.

Within federal structures there are considerable differences in the ‘balance of power’ between the central government and the state governments. In some the state governments appear to be predominant, in others the central government, and naturally this is an issue that has always generated considerable friction. However carefully the constitution has been written, ‘demarcation disputes’ are a characteristic of federal governments and in these disputes we have to take note both of the constitutional structure and the pattern of behaviour that has developed within the structure. Two of the older Commonwealth federations – Australia and Canada – provide a good example.

Australia has a federal constitution which appears to have been written with the balance in favour of the states. There have been few amendments to the constitution, but by a series of judicial decisions, by changes in the financial relationship between the central government and the states and by an expansion in government services, the central government has steadily tilted the balance of government activity in its favour. Meanwhile, in Canada, where originally the provinces appeared to have fewer powers, the balance appears to have tipped towards them. This could well be because of the special position of the French Canadians in Quebec, who, in emphasising their separateness as a people, have emphasised the rights and powers of the provincial governments. In Australia there is no analogous group to the French Canadians – no people who feel such a distinction and separateness to other Australians, and no people whom the government have to treat so carefully in terms of susceptibilities and accepting their rights.¹ The result has been that

1 It could be suggested that the aborigines feel distinct and separate, but they have not been associated with any particular state government, and have had little political influence.



Figure 24.10 Australia, which has a federal constitution. The chart shows the distribution of some resources between the states (1967–69).

	N.S.W.	Victoria	Queensland	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tasmania	N. Terr.	Aust.Cap Terr.
% of Total Area	10.43	2.96	22.47	12.81	32.88	.89	17.53	0.03
Estimated Population: June 1969	4,474.8	3,384.1	1,768.0	1,144.4	946.4	388.5	68.0	122.0
State Consolidated Revenue Funds*: (dollars in Millions) 1969		664	388	287	275	107		
Expenditure: (dollars in Millions)	967	667	389	287	276	110		
Value of Primary Industries & Factories per head of Population: 1967–68	943.8	929.9	747.4	801.2	930.7	803.9		884.7

* To avoid duplication, Treasury Transfers to Business undertakings are excluded.

if a scale were drawn up of federal states' behaviour, Australia would emerge as closer to a unitary state than Canada, although, of course, they both retain federal structures.

Other general issues regarding federalism can be found in Carter and Herz (1965) on pp. 90–6.

A *confederation* is not a state and should not be confused with federalism. A confederation is a league of states who are joined together for certain purposes but who retain sovereignty in themselves and who are not constituent units of a central government.

The German states prior to the creations of the German federal union under Bismarck in 1871 constituted a confederal formation. It may be that confederations create situations in which federal bargains can more easily be struck. Those who advocate political unification in Europe support the extension and strengthening of the European Economic Community and other European connections on these grounds.

3.10 Elections

The limitation of requiring the government to seek re-election brings us into the whole world of elections and voting rights. It involves such major questions as: 'Who has the right to vote?' 'Is the executive as well as the legislature to be elected?' 'How are constituencies to be defined?' 'Should regions or provinces have special representation?' And so the questions roll on. You can see from the enormous scope of such questions that we can only hope to scratch the surface of this issue and so we shall try to concentrate on some major points and avoid being caught in too much detail about particular electoral arrangements.

The first point that can be made is that having to fight for re-election is a very genuine limitation on any ruling group. However banal election campaigns may appear at the time, the mere process by which a governing party has to contest an election is a major limitation on any government. In saying this, we must make a clear distinction between those elections which involve choice and contest, and so act as a limit on the government, and elections in which there is no contest or choice. For example, an election in a totalitarian system does not aim at limiting the government, and certainly not at changing it. The function of an election in this case is rather to mobilise public support and demonstrate respect and confidence in the government.

Normally we associate a contested election with one in which a governing party has to face an opposition party (or parties) which is ready and eager to criticise and if possible to replace the government.



Figure 24.11 Elections in Britain.

We normally assume that in one-party states there are no competitive elections. There is at least one partial exception to this. In Tanzania, although the constitution lays down that there is only one party, there are genuine contests at the elections between members of the ruling Tanzanian African National Union (TANU). In each constituency two members are nominated to contest the seat. In 1965, in the first election held under this system, two Cabinet Ministers, six Junior Ministers, and nine backbench MPs were defeated, while three Junior Ministers and ten MPs were not nominated to stand (Tordoff, 1967, p. 39).

A second major point we can make about contested elections is that the form of the elections can make a clear and often major contribution not only in deciding who rules, but also in the pattern of the government. Take the case of proportional representation.¹ If it were used in this country, it would, on the voting figures of the post-war elections, have given the Liberals a substantial number of seats in Parliament, probably between 10 and 20 per cent. If this had been the case there would have been three major parties in the Commons and this could easily have led to coalition governments. A different pattern would necessarily have entered British politics. If we can speculate even further, the Liberals might argue that once they had demonstrated their ability to capture 20 per cent of the seats they would have grown from strength to strength and perhaps we would have entered a new age of Liberal government. But there is another possible development of proportional representation. This would be the appearance of a rash of small parties so that instead of three major parties we would have a legislature of many parties all with their 'proportion' of the vote and their proportion of MPs. Government might then consist of eternal coalitions, with their drawbacks of continual compromises and small parties able to hold the government to ransom. This, of course, is all speculation and completely different developments might have appeared if proportional representation had been used, but the speculation does emphasise the way in which a change in this vital part of the structure of government can influence the whole pattern of government.

An equally clear example of the impact of a change in the electoral system can be drawn from a change in franchise arrangements. In the radio programme for this unit, we are examining constitutional developments in Rhodesia and there the franchise has been a central issue of dispute. If Rhodesia changed from its present restrictive franchise which ensures a white dominated government to 'one man, one vote', there would certainly be a black government. This would have a major impact not only within the government, but right through Rhodesian society. We have already noted that the present government upholds a distribution of land which is very favourable to whites. If there were an African government it would almost certainly want to change the present arrangements, and the chances are that the present barriers that exist between the races in terms of land holding would be substantially amended or perhaps broken down entirely.

1 In the very roughest terms, this involves a return of party members on the basis of support for the party across the electorate as a whole rather than in individual constituencies.

There are many other examples we could take to show the importance of electoral systems to the pattern of government. We could, for example, look at America and discuss the way the electoral system gives the states a voice in the central government, or we could discuss the significance of the American practice of electing officials who in this country are appointed as civil servants. But the importance of the electoral system should already have become clear.

A final general point which can be made about electoral systems is that elections are one means by which members of a democracy participate directly in government. It offers an opportunity to exercise one aspect of positive liberty (Unit 2, p. 49). Other opportunities for participation occur in the informal structure, as will be discussed in the next unit, but even then many of the informal activities are influenced by and related to the electoral system. Remove the right to vote and the informal activity would itself change radically.

3.11 The Organisation of Government

Already in discussing the limitations of government we have strayed into examinations of the way governments are organised and the way governments carry out their business. This brings us to issues some of which are discussed by Carter and Herz (1965) in their chapters III and IV on 'Patterns of Government' and 'The Framework of Government'. Here we must limit ourselves again, but as in the case of electoral systems it is hoped that the importance of the issues which are involved will be clear even from a very brief outline. We shall confine ourselves to examining some of the arrangements for carrying out the business of government under two heads: (1) Making the laws; (2) Executives and bureaucracies. In doing this, we must be conscious of large areas which are neglected, such as the judiciary.

3.12 Making the Laws

Political scientists now usually speak of 'rule making' in which the making of laws is only one aspect. Certainly if 'law making' is defined as the activity which is concerned with regulations or instructions which receive the approval and authority of the legislature, then 'rule making' is a much wider activity than 'law making'.

Perhaps it is easier to understand this by noting some of the sources of rules which are not approved by the legislature.

(a) Rules may be derived from customs and norms. Often these rules are not formalised but are accepted in a society simply because they are the 'customary' or 'traditional' way of behaving. But sometimes they are incorporated into the law which is administered by the courts, as has happened in the United Kingdom with the common law. The distinction which can be drawn here is between *statute law*, which consists of Acts of Parliament, and *common law*, which has grown over a period rather than consciously been made, and has been based on the norms (the accepted behaviour patterns) of the society over the centuries. W. H. Geldart wrote:

If we could imagine the Common Law swept away and the Statute Law preserved, we should have only disjointed rules torn from their context, and no provision at all for many of the most important relations in life. (Geldart, 1929, p. 11)

(b) Rules may be developed from the practice which is followed

in carrying out the business of government. For example in the Rhodesian constitutions of 1923 and 1961 there was no specific bar placed on direct interference by the British Government in Rhodesia's internal affairs, but 'a convention' grew up that the British Government would not interfere and this was observed right up to U.D.I. (Barber 1967, pp. 75-9). Another example which could arise would be in a labour dispute, involving the unions, management, and the government ministry concerned with labour relations. The participants may agree on a procedure, a pattern of behaviour, to be used for future negotiations and ways of reaching agreement. In doing this, they have accepted rules by which the negotiations will be conducted and in keeping to the rules they may explain it in terms of procedure or accepting a convention.

Having made the point that law making is only a part of the activity of 'rule making', we can now add a further proviso about the role of the legislature. The legislature approves and authorises statute law, but it only constitutes one of many steps in 'making' the law. (This is a point which is explained in the television programme.) But although the legislature does not *by itself* make statute law its consent is essential for the law to be given authority and to be enforceable in the courts. In this way the legislature plays a special and particular part in law-making. Whatever all the other bodies involved may want, there is no statute law without the approval of the legislature, and, even where there is common law, statute law takes precedence. Again to quote Geldart:

Where Statute Law and Common Law have come into competition, it is the former that prevails. . . . No court or judge can refuse to enforce an Act of Parliament. No development of the Common Law can repeal an Act of Parliament. (Geldart, 1929, p. 11)

Geldart's statement appears to set Parliament apart and put it in a formidable position. In the legal sense this is right, but the examination of the law-making process in the television programme shows that its role is limited to a part of the process. It is made clear in the programme that while the legislature may *approve* the law it certainly does not *initiate* it. Legislatures are usually large and cumbersome bodies with general competence rather than particular expertise, and it is particular expertise that is often required for initiating legislature and seeing it through the various processes before it can be applied.

To accept a limited role for legislatures in law-making need not imply consigning them to a minor role in the government process. Professor Blondel (1969, pp. 324-5), who concentrated on the *role* of legislative assemblies, rather than their *formal* position, emphasised this when he wrote: 'The role (or function) of assemblies is thus only as an extreme case one of rule-making. Assemblies are bodies of men which are concerned with influencing rule-makers to a greater or lesser extent, and with seeing that some of the detailed problems which concern their members are indeed carried out in the way they desire. . . . Assemblies typically do not make rules; they exert an influence on rules . . . either in inducing them to produce new rules or in observing how rules are applied.' If we accept this judgement, it helps to explain the importance of the work of bodies within the legislature - the American Congressional Committees, for example, which you can read about in Levine and Cornwell (1968, pp. 93-7).

The executive and the bureaucracy are both concerned with carrying out the business of government. In this they must be distinguished from the members of the legislature (the approvers of the law) and the judiciary (the judges of the law). In fact, the distinction is often blurred for, simply in administering the business of government, decisions have to be taken which are on the borders of these other activities. If a civil servant decides to use his discretion by ignoring a regulation in a particular case because of the personal circumstances of the people involved, he is, in a sense, making a judgement. But, given that there is this overlapping of activities, there is also a clear band of activity in which the business of government is executed or administered. This band of activity has grown rapidly during this century and appears likely to continue its growth as governments accept an increasingly 'positive' rather than a principally 'regulatory' (law and order) role in society. Today, governments are involved, and widely expected to be involved, in a vast and increasing range of activities, such as managing the economy and providing social services. To carry out this wide range of tasks, the governments require increasingly large executives and bureaucracies. Again, a proviso must be added. For centuries governments have been involved in such activities as managing the economy and providing social services, but in the past the scale of involvement was relatively small. The change in the scale of activity has been so marked that it can be argued that it represents a change of kind rather than degree.

The executive and bureaucracy are made up of men who hold 'office' in the government. Sometimes 'executive' is widely defined so that the bureaucracy, which consists of civil servants, is seen as part of the executive. However, within limited government, the usual distinction made between the two groups is that the executive is made up of elected officers – 'politicians' – while the bureaucrats are appointed to office. Even this distinction is not always clear cut. For example, the American President appoints his cabinet, but the appointees are seen as 'politicians' rather than bureaucrats. In one-party states, the distinction is especially difficult to draw as bureaucrats are often expected to be party members and may combine administrative and law approving roles.

Within the executives of limited governments, the most commonly drawn distinction is between *Parliamentary* and *Presidential* government which you can read about in Carter and Herz (1965, chapter III).

All large organisations develop bureaucracies and the government being the largest organisation within each state develops the largest bureaucracy of all. Bureaucracies vary from state to state, but common characteristics and ideals can be identified within them all. Among the characteristics are: (a) they are organised on a hierarchical basis; (b) there is differentiation between the offices and functions within the hierarchy, i.e. that each bureaucrat plays a particular 'role'; (c) there are specific qualifications laid down for holding office; (d) they conduct business according to recognised procedures and methods.

Perhaps the last of the common characteristics should be grouped among 'ideals' rather than characteristics, for not all bureaucracies match their public claims with their actual performance. This will

become clearer as we list some of the common 'ideals' which most modern bureaucrats set up for themselves. These include: (a) objectivity; (b) discretion; (c) precision; (d) consistency; (e) speed. You may think that these are also invaluable ideals for Open University Students!

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Unit 25

Informal Political Institutions



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INFORMAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

When the question is asked 'how are societies governed' we naturally think of the sort of institutions considered in the previous section: in the United Kingdom there is Parliament, the Cabinet, Whitehall, the Scottish Office, Stormont, and so on; in the United States it is the Presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court. Yet while these are the major institutions of the state a knowledge of them takes us only part of the way towards an appreciation of how societies are governed, for governing a society means taking decisions about how the power of the state is used; knowing how it is that particular decisions come to be taken. How was it, for instance, that Parliament in Britain came to pass a law authorising the introduction of commercial television? What led the Supreme Court in the United States to declare segregation in schools to be unconstitutional? To understand why these sorts of decision are taken, and how governments come to do the things they do, means that, while investigating the formal structure considered in the last section, attention needs also to be given to the informal political institutions.

In this unit, therefore, I will be considering these informal political institutions. First, in the introductory section the question of what is meant by informal political institutions will briefly be discussed. In the next two sections the activities and forms of political parties and interest groups will be considered. In the final section, an introduction will be provided to the task of differentiating between the political processes in different states: having, that is, understood to a certain degree the informal as well as the formal political institutions in states, it will be possible to see how the process of politics in different states can usefully be described and distinguished.¹

The first objective of this course narrative and of the unit as a whole is therefore to provide an understanding of informal political institutions both in general terms, and in the particular situation of a single society – where the United States is the chosen example. In the process of doing this a subsidiary objective is to indicate the value of a particular way of advancing understanding founded on categorising, classifying and comparing.

1.1 Parties and Interest Groups Distinguished

When we speak of informal political institutions, we are referring to organisations like *political parties* and *interest groups*. These are institutions in the sense that this term is used in the social sciences. They are political to the extent that such institutions directly affect

¹ One limitation of the discussion in this and succeeding units should be noted. Attention is concentrated on politics rather than administration. As was explained in the introduction to the block this is one of the two commonly recognised aspects of government, because conventionally, government is regarded as having both a political and administrative dimension. Politics is traditionally described as the process leading up to the taking of a decision about the exercise of legitimate power, administration describes the carrying out of such a decision.

the way in which the lawful power of the state is exercised. And they are informal so far as the state is concerned, since although political parties and interest groups may have a recognised and regulated formal structure of their own, they are not part of the recognised and regular institutions of government. They are not, that is, normally described in the constitution, where there is one, and are not for the most part formally established by law as a part of the government of the society, though they do frequently depend on the formal structure in that this often prescribes what can and cannot be done.

In discussing the informal political institutions that exist in society probably the most widely used categorisation is one that differentiates political parties and interest or pressure groups.¹ The characteristics of each of these are commonly stated to be that political parties are institutions which are declaredly concerned to control power, while interest groups are institutions which directly or indirectly seek to, or just do, influence the way the power of government is exercised. A distinctive characteristic of political parties in other words is that they put forward candidates in elections with the apparent objective of securing their return to the legislature, or their occupation of some particular office so that they are thus in a position to participate in exercising the power which belongs to that body. Neumann's article in the *Reader* (p. 441), as will be seen, describes parties as 'those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and compete for popular support'. Interest groups, in contrast, are regarded as bodies that do not seek to control power by presenting candidates for election or by holding public office, but have an interest in the way a legislature or other public body behaves, and in consequence seek to influence this behaviour. They have as one scholar has put it, 'a conscious desire to have public policy . . . move in a particular general or specific direction'.² Both political parties and interest groups play a part in affecting what governments do and how they do it, but there is a difference in the way in which the two act.

In practice, the categories of political party and interest group are not always as easy to apply as this account suggests. Contested elections, as a means of determining who shall hold public office, are a feature of only a limited number of societies, and thus in many societies a basic prerequisite for the differentiation of organisations as political parties and interest groups does not exist. Even, moreover, where elections are held, there are many organisations that do not fit neatly into one category or the other. When the Anti-Vivisection League has put up a single candidate in a British General Election, it cannot be expected to win control of the government. Conversely,

1 The term interest group will be used here. There is a continuing debate about the most appropriate term, but pressure group appears to be losing ground, first because it is thought to be more evaluative than interest group, and secondly because it implies a method of operating – exerting pressure – which is either too restrictive or alternatively inaccurate. For two recent contributions to this debate see Graham Wootton, *Interest Groups*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1970, pp. 1–27; Francis G. Castles, *Pressure Groups and Political Culture*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, pp. 1–8. Other terms have also been suggested including 'the Lobby', for which see S. E. Finer, *Anonymous Empire*, London, Pall Mall Press, 1958, pp. 1–4.

2 L. La Palombara, *Interest Groups in Italian Politics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964, p. 16.

many organisations in Britain and elsewhere sponsor party candidates in elections without openly becoming political parties. These examples illustrate the point that there are difficulties in attempting a rigid differentiation of informal political institutions as either political parties or interest groups. Nevertheless, the concepts of political party and interest group have a basic usefulness, and furthermore, they occupy an established part in the writing about the informal institutions of government.¹

2 POLITICAL PARTIES

2.1 Introduction

Organisations to which the term political party is applied have emerged characteristically along with the development of representative government during the last two hundred years. They have been encouraged by the opportunities provided by elections and by the challenge of organising support in assemblies, and it is this origin that explains the way in which a political party is commonly defined. Yet the range of activities in which parties characteristically engage is wide and in this section the variety of these is indicated.

Although emerging initially as part of the informal machinery within representative government, parties have come to act in a number of different ways to achieve a range of different objectives. No two parties are exactly alike and none perform precisely as others do, nor cover the same range of activities as others, but looked at collectively, there are five major areas of activity in which they, or at least some of them, engage: those of selecting people for public office, communicating between the public and government or at least acting as the spokesmen or agents of the public, directly providing services themselves, educating or informing the public, and acting as instruments of control or direction.

2.2 Activities of Parties

2.2.1 POLITICAL RECRUITMENT

Many political parties in the first place are involved in the process of recruiting people for public office. In representative systems parties frequently provide machinery for selecting and nominating candidates to run for election. The office to which an election is to be made is determined by the formal structure of government: it may be membership of a local council, a city police chief, a national assemblyman, or the presidency of the United States or any other office. The process of selecting and nominating may take the form of deciding between different individuals who are competing for nomination, or it may be a matter of finding someone willing and suitable to stand for office. The range of offices involved is wide and the process used differs, but parties are frequently involved in one way or another in operating machinery for selecting candidates: exercising, that is, a function of *political recruitment*.

¹ An influential discussion of this point was that by V. O. Key, Jr., *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups*, fourth edition, New York, Crowell, 1958, p. 22. For two recent discussions see A. Holtzman, *Interest Groups and Lobbying*, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1966, pp. 10-13; M. Curtis, *Comparative Government and Politics*, London, Harper and Row, 1968, pp. 127-41.

Articulating and communicating interests can also involve parties in *aggregating* them. Out of the countless complaints, expectations or demands expressed in a specific form and a particular context, parties may select certain ideas, or they may group together similar demands and express them in a more general form. For example, an up-country village in West Africa may want a gravity feed water supply, another needs a bridge over a stream and a third is agitating for a court house in which law cases could be heard and public meetings held. Such specific interests could be communicated as separate demands but a party could also combine them and express a more general demand for increased attention to be given to local public works. In aggregating demands a party may furthermore be involved in reconciling conflicting interests: overcoming differences in order to be able to present agreed demands to public officers, and from the party's point of view retain the support of previously conflicting groups. The village demanding the installation of a gravity feed water supply might present its demands as part of a general claim that prior attention be given by government to water supplies over court houses, thus bringing this village into conflict with the one interested in a court house. To present these two under an umbrella of an increase in expenditure on local public works, rather say than increased diplomatic representation abroad, involves a reconciliation of certain apparently conflicting claims.

In providing a focus for demands and a means for articulating, aggregating and communicating them, a party may not be an agent for change within an established formal structure but instead an instrument of revolution. Rather than seeking to maintain support for itself by securing benefits – gravity feed water supplies, or court houses – a party may seek to express immediate demands as discontent with the whole established order and to direct interest towards overturning this order. The Nazi Party in Germany in the 1920s channelled dissatisfaction into an attack on the Weimar Republic. The Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union in contemporary Rhodesia seeks to build up support on the basis that none of the immediate demands of the people – for example for education for their children, freedom to move around the country, or an improved standard of living – can be attained without overturning a political and economic order based on oppression by a racial minority. These and other parties seek to articulate and aggregate demands, but, rather than communicate with the government with the aim of seeking benefits, they are concerned to use their support to provide them with the power to replace the existing political order: they have a *revolutionary* objective.

As a further extension to articulating and aggregating demands, parties may themselves establish machinery to bring benefits to supporters. Rather than relying on the existing government, or on the hope of benefits under a new post-revolutionary political order, parties may set up machinery that supplements, duplicates or even supersedes that of the government in order to satisfy supporters, or achieve ends decided on by the party. This may reach the point where the party rather than the government provides supporters, or citizens more generally, with many needed services. The Apra party in Peru for instance, maintains barbers' shops, soccer teams and cafeterias. Or, to take a second example, the work of nationalist parties in West Africa after the Second World War has been

discussed in the following terms.

On occasion, before they acquired government responsibilities, mass parties disregarded – indeed replaced – the existing legal institutions. To the extent that for a time they substituted, or proposed to substitute, their structure for that of the state – that they developed their own ways of administering justice or of keeping order – these parties filled a revolutionary function. . . . For some time the population considered them far more than the legal institutions conceived in London or in Paris, to be legitimate. . . . They and their cultural affiliates were interested in everything from the cradle to the grave – in birth, initiation, religion, marriage, divorce, dancing, song, plays, feuds, debts, land, migration, death, public order – and not only in electoral success. (Schachter, 1961, pp. 299–300.)

2.2.4 POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Political parties besides being at the receiving end of communications from people in society may also initiate communications to the public and so engage in different ways in *political socialisation*. Communication between party and public may be providing information. A governing party will explain its achievements while in office, an individual candidate seeking re-election may explain that he was instrumental in securing a new public convenience in the market place, a local party may explain to people how to claim unemployment benefits. They will also inform people how to contact their local representative, or how to register as a voter. Take for instance this account of an election campaign in Sierra Leone in 1957:

At first the SLPP (Sierra Leone Peoples Party) probably made rather more use than did the others of such aids to receptivity as calypso bands and film shows, but as polling day approached their technique became simpler and they applied themselves more single-mindedly than any other party to the task of getting all available ballots, unspoiled into the right boxes. Their last meetings consisted almost exclusively of demonstrations of the technique of voting, with practice for members of the audience who were left in any doubt, and applause for those who got it right, interspersed at very frequent intervals with the words – repeated by the audience – ‘palm tree’, to familiarise all with the party’s election symbol. (Mackenzie and Robinson, 1960, p. 203.)

A second and wider educative role, and a further aspect of political socialisation which is performed by parties, is that of inducing people to see things as the party sees them. In its communications with the public, a party can be establishing particular categories and encouraging people to interpret situations in terms of these categories. When, for example, the Rhodesia Front in Rhodesia adverted constantly to European civilised standards as against the African way of life they presented a way of looking at particular situations so that they were generalised, categorised and judged in terms of race. Elsewhere, parties seek to establish different categories in terms of which situations are understood – liberty, imperialism, capitalism, free enterprise – and to associate particular favourable or unfavourable values with them. By their action they are socialising people to look at the world and understand it in one particular way.

In a more specific manner also political parties are involved in educating people to want and expect particular things. They present manifestos, programmes and policies, they seek to build up support for them and thus to want the things that the party claims that it will provide. In the process they are attempting to rally support to themselves as the agents for effecting desired changes.



"HIM GOOD COOK, LIKE US!"

Figure 25.2 White Rhodesians showed a preoccupation with what they called 'civilised standards'.

2.2.5 PARTIES AS INSTRUMENTS OF CONTROL

Finally, parties may be instruments of control and coercion, forming part of an elaborate apparatus for ensuring that people behave as some leader or government requires. A party machine, for instance, can be an instrument not simply for educating people to vote, but for seeing that people do vote and vote as required, and its range of uses can extend far beyond voting. Indeed, the position in the USSR has been summarised as follows:

From the point of view of the leaders of the regime, the Party organisation operates essentially as a disciplined phalanx to carry out their will. The Party has its units in every major organisation and establishment in Soviet society. The Party leadership holds its local representatives responsible for fulfilment of plans in all areas and organisations to which they are assigned. To be sure, day-to-day operating responsibilities are vested in the governmental hierarchy of managers and administrators. But every level of the governmental hierarchy is both interpenetrated with, and subject to check by the corresponding level of the Party hierarchy. Since the Party leadership is the incarnation of supreme power in the Soviet state, its local emissaries serve not only as the eyes and ears but also as the voice of the Kremlin. As a matter of accepted practice, they are expected to keep in touch with all the enterprises and activities within their jurisdiction, to be alert to any failure of performance, to report constantly to their own higher authorities on the state of plan fulfilment, and to take such measures, in collaboration with local administrators, as will ensure the realization of the goals and tasks which the Party high command has set. (Fainsod, 1967, p. 215.)

2.2.6 CONCLUSION

Political parties may be involved in a wide range of important activities. They emerged along with the development of repre-

sentative government,¹ and the continued importance of some parties lies in the functions they perform of political recruitment, in aggregating and articulating interests, and in educating and informing the public. The functions parties perform within the limits of the formal structure of government may affect, to the point of determining, how power is used. Where parties' functions extend to activities which supersede those of the government – where, for instance, they operate competing services and exercise a power of control and coercion – the parties take on an even wider significance.



Figure 25.3 'Stalin's silent majority'.

Here an appreciation of how the society is governed depends more on an understanding of the party than on what is supposedly the formal structure of government.

2.3 Classification of Parties

By describing what parties do, some general appreciation will have been gained of the wide range of their activities, and it will be realised how mistaken it would be to assume that, because we know something about what, say, the Labour or Conservative parties do, all organisations calling themselves parties act in a similar way. Indeed, the account of the range of activities engaged in by parties shows that simply to describe an organisation as a political party is not in itself particularly illuminating. The Kommei To in Japan, Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union in Southern Rhodesia, CPP in Ghana, and Fianna Fail in Ireland are all parties, but the label 'party' does not itself create any deep awareness of what these specific organisations habitually do. Are they bodies that recruit people for public office? Or are they organisations that run a chain of barbers' shops? Or are they bodies that direct people to do things

¹ While making this statement, it is important to point out that there are conflicting ideas about why parties emerged; among alternative theories are ones for example which suggest that their emergence is due to certain circumstances – particularly conditions of crisis – occurring during the process of development and modernisation in societies. See J. La Palombara and M. Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 7–21.

and punish those who disobey? Given that there is such a range in their activities some greater precision is needed in the description of individual parties if some general understanding is to be conveyed about what a particular party can be expected to do. In other words, there is a value in organising parties into certain general categories which establish types of party.

2.3.1 PARTIES OF COMPETITION AND DICTATORIAL PARTIES

A starting point in this task of grouping parties into types is to distinguish two broadly different sorts of party. A distinction is commonly and usefully drawn between, on the one hand, parties like the Democratic Party in the USA, the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, and the Congress Party in India, and, on the other, the Communist Party in the USSR, the Nazi Party in Germany from 1935–45, or the Convention Peoples' Party in the latter days of Nkrumah's rule in Ghana. The distinction between them is in terms of their ends and particularly their attitude to the formal structure of government and to the working of politics.

To compare two of these parties will emphasise the nature of the differences between them. A central concern of the Democratic Party in the USA is with elections. The Party is taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the constitution to seek power in the government. It is competing every four years with other parties to have its candidate elected as President. Through elections to the House of Representatives and Senate it is seeking to control Congress. The same applies to the Governorships of the States, the State legislature, the position of Mayor in many cities, and other positions within government from the level of the local community to the Federal Government. The Party is a large and complex machine for winning elections and for making sure that those once in power are kept in touch with those who will have the opportunity to re-elect or unseat them.¹

By contrast the Communist Party in the USSR occupies a different position in the society and approaches a range of somewhat similar activities from a different standpoint. The Communist Party does not compete for members; it is a privilege to be a member. It is not the rival of other parties for power under the state: no rival is permitted and the party rather than being subordinate to the state is its controller. When there are elections, the party's task cannot be to win, because there are no rival parties, but to turn out the largest possible positive vote for its candidates as a demonstration of overwhelming popular support for the ruling regime. The party is the leader, guide and director, at one level seeing that the organs of the state function as they are required to by the party, and at a very different level watching to see that the farm manager fulfils his quotas and workers do not slack – seeing that they do not engage, that is, in anti-party activities and do fulfil the requirements of the party and the State. At the same time, the party is portrayed as the representative of the proletariat. In part this means that it represents what it chooses to regard as the interests of the workers and in part this internal organisation of the party does provide for the communication of workers' expressed expectations.

¹ For further details see the account in Levine and Cornwell, *Introduction to American Government*, Collier Macmillan, 1968, Chapter 4.

It is evident that there is a fundamental difference between these two sorts of organisations, both of which are nevertheless termed parties. The difference between them derives from their ends and attitudes and is revealed in the relations established with the state, with other parties, and with the public. The differences are brought out through three questions that can be asked of parties. First, is the party subordinate to the state – that is, does it live within the rules or does it make them itself? Secondly, does it work on the premise of competing with other parties rather than overcoming, subduing or suppressing all competitors? And thirdly, does it articulate and aggregate public interests or alternatively is it an instrument for organising the public? Parties like the Democratic Party which operate under the state, competing according to the electoral system, and under the majority voting principle in representative legislatures, and which accept that there are, and should be, competitors, are *parties of competition*; and they contrast with parties which are superior to the state, allow no competition and organise the public. These are *parties of control*. Neumann and Carter and Herz, using similar principles of differentiation, speak of democratic and dictatorial parties. Where the term party conveyed only vague expectations about the organisation so labelled, the categories *party of competition* and *dictatorial party* when applied to a specific organisation indicate in a broad way what that body can be expected to do and how it will do it.

2.3.2 FURTHER CLASSIFICATIONS: PRAGMATIC AND DOCTRINAL PARTIES

This process of categorising can usefully be taken considerably further so that other types can be distinguished. In this way it becomes possible to speak of a particular party as being of a certain type and by so doing convey a fairly precise guide to its ends, the way it operates or the manner of its organisation. Without pursuing this process too far, we will consider briefly three contrasting pairs of categories and see what they indicate about particular parties.

Most of the useful supplementary distinctions in relation to parties apply to parties of competition rather than to parties of control. Here one common distinction is between parties for which the dominant goal is that of gaining power, and, on the other hand, parties where membership and support depend on particular convictions and where the primary aim of the party is to advance a particular doctrine or ideology. It has often been said, for instance, that the major parties in the USA and UK, the Liberal Party in Australia and the SPD in the German Federal Republic among others, are of the former type: they are pre-eminently machines for winning elections and for gaining power through elections, and they are sometimes described as *pragmatic parties*, in that while they present policies and promote particular causes they do not, generally speaking, derive their inspiration from doctrine or ideology. With them, an account of the activities they engage in emphasises those of recruitment, articulation, aggregation and the two-way communication of information.

In contrast to these parties are others in which commitment to an ideology and to advancing causes founded on this ideology forms a dominant characteristic, and where their activities concentrate more on informing, educating and recruiting. This is true of the Maoist Communist Party in India, where the adherents parade waving the Little Red Book of Chairman Mao and chant his

thoughts; and the Kommei To in Japan which is the political arm of a religious order; and the Herstigte Nasionale party which contested the 1970 election in South Africa, upholding the cause of an uncompromising adherence to apartheid. Some parties therefore can be identified as *pragmatic*, others as *doctrinal* or *ideological*.

Having introduced these two types of parties of competition it is appropriate to ask you whether you would agree that the Labour Party in Britain is wholly a pragmatic party as suggested above. The argument in the late 1950s about the appropriateness of retaining as a statement of party objects that it stood 'to secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production. . . .'¹ might suggest that it was not simply a pragmatic party. Parties in fact are rarely found to be purely of one type or another, and elements of the two types can be found in many parties differently balanced in different ones. What can frequently be said is that a party belongs more to the pragmatic type than the doctrinal. These categories derive from the objectives of the parties and thus the activities on which they place most emphasis. Each operates in a distinguishable manner and affects government differently. Many other ways exist of differentiating and categorising parties using these same general criteria of their objectives, method of approach and basis of support: nationalist, ethnic or racial, and socialist parties are simply three examples.

2.3.3 PARTIES WITH DIRECT AND INDIRECT STRUCTURES

A second way of differentiating between parties of competition is according to the form of their organisation. The categories of pragmatic and doctrinal relate to the goals of parties, but parties can also be investigated on the basis of the way in which they are organised. This was one of the approaches used by Maurice Duverger (1954) in an influential book *Political Parties*. In this study Duverger sought to lay the foundation for a systematic analysis of parties by ordering existing knowledge, establishing a system of classification and postulating a series of hypotheses on the basis of which further investigation could proceed. In his analysis Duverger started from party organisation; on this he suggested that a useful distinction could be drawn according to whether they had a direct or indirect structure. The term direct structure he used to describe the organisation that presupposed direct membership. Thus the Conservative Party in Britain has a large number of individuals as members of the party and its organisation from branch level upwards assumes such membership. The Conservative Party is in no way unusual: it is a characteristic of a majority of contemporary parties that they enrol individuals as party members. Indirect structure, by contrast, describes a party which is an alliance of associated organisations and where there is no individual membership of the party as such, only membership of the associated organisation. This was true, for instance, of the British Labour Party when it was first formed. It applied also to the Belgian Catholic Bloc which between 1921 and 1939 comprised four groups of Roman Catholic organisations. They were the Boerenbond – a league of Flemish peasants; the

¹ The Constitution of the Labour Party, 1918, Chapter 3, Clause d.

Catholic Trade Unions, Co-operatives and Friendly Societies; and two groups covering the conservative middle class, artisans and shopkeepers. Individuals became attached to the Catholic Bloc only by membership of one of these associated bodies.

2.3.4 MASS AND CADRE PARTIES

A final means of distinguishing parties is according to their membership. Again, Duverger can be taken to exemplify the approach. Once more he employs a pair of terms – *mass* and *cadre*. Mass parties aimed to recruit into membership as many members as possible.

Consider, for example, the French Socialist Party: in its eyes the recruiting of members is a fundamental activity, both from the political and the financial standpoints. In the first place, the party aims at the political education of the working class, at picking out from it an élite capable of taking over the government and the administration of the country: the members are therefore the very substance of the party, the stuff of its activity. Without members the party would be like a teacher without pupils. Secondly from the financial point of view, the party is essentially based upon the subscriptions paid by its members: the first duty of the branch is to ensure that they are regularly collected. In this way, the party gathers the funds required for its work of political education and for its day to day activity; in the same way it is enabled to finance electioneering: the financial and political are here at one. (Duverger, 1954, p. 63.)¹

In contrast to the mass party the *cadre* party does not aim to recruit a mass membership, but instead to enrol in the party individuals who already have standing and influence in the society. 'Influential persons, in the first place, whose name, prestige, or connections can provide a backing for the candidate and secure him votes; experts, in the second place, who know how to handle the electors and how to organise a campaign; last of all financiers, who can bring the sinews of war.' (Duverger, 1954, p. 64.) It is the involvement of such persons in the party that gives to the party the capacity to campaign and compete for votes in elections. Duverger suggests that the Radical Socialist Party in France was one example of a *cadre* party as were, according to him, American parties and the majority of European moderate and conservative parties.

2.3.5 VALUES OF CLASSIFICATIONS

These ways of classifying and describing parties make an important contribution to the analysis and understanding of government. Parties, taken overall, engage in such a wide range of activities that more precise descriptions are needed to convey a meaningful appreciation of what a particular party does and what such party has in common with others. The terms considered give an indication of the sort of organisation that a specific party is: it may for instance be a party of control or alternatively a pragmatic party of competition with a mass membership and direct structure. These categories are pitched at a level where they can serve as useful and meaningful descriptions for the term party covers so much that it is frequently unhelpful or even misleading. Yet concepts are needed if more is to be achieved than understanding each party as a unique phenomenon, using words to describe it that apply to the single party alone.

¹ Duverger, *op. cit.*, compare the mass party with Neumann's (1955) category of party of integration.

Hence the usefulness of such concepts as party of control and cadre party.

Such categories and descriptions depend on a consideration of what parties actually do, what their objectives are, and how they are organised. A grasp of a party's operations in some detail is required, in other words, if it is to be fitted into a given category. Categories seen as descriptive labels are worth little more than the range of details to which they refer, but – and this is an important value – they do serve as a shorthand in the social sciences for such complex sets of facts.

Establishing categories and classifying is also an essential prerequisite for making generalisations, whether about parties or other phenomena, and generalisations are necessary for explaining phenomena and as a basis for raising questions, and thus as a way of advancing our understanding. Categorising and classifying are not exercises for their own sake. They find their justification in the way they help to advance our knowledge of phenomena whether it is parties or some other institution or process. They do this by clarifying the differences and similarities between the parties, and the more subtle the classification the more it exposes the less obvious differences and similarities. Neumann, you will notice, argues that the extent of the difference between parties of competition and parties of control makes them unprofitable as a basis for deriving generalisations that cover them both. Categories to be useful have to be less inclusive and the classifications more subtle. The process of identifying these differences and similarities then prompts questions about why particular things should be, and what the relationship is between particular differences and something else in the social situation. It is on the basis of identifying and asking these questions and discovering answers to them that it becomes possible to explain particular circumstances and to make broader generalisations.

The process of classifying parties has lain behind the work of formulating generalisations about parties and their development, and one example of this is provided by Duverger. On the basis of differentiating indirect and direct structures and distinguishing parties as between cadre parties and mass parties, it became possible to formulate the question of which type of party was increasing and which declining. It emerged that among parties of competition the trend is away from indirect and cadre parties and towards direct and mass parties. Furthermore the connection was postulated of a relationship between type of party and capacity to attract voters. In particular Duverger argued that the success of the party depends on its capacity to enrol members and maintain their attachment. Such a hypothesis helps to stimulate further enquiry. An investigation of an exception to the trend from cadre party to mass party may help for instance to define more sharply the conditions in which the generalisation about the trend is valid. Or the hypothesis may lead to investigations into the validity of a connection that is postulated. Thus in relation to Duverger's generalisation the assumption has been queried that the central activity of parties is to enrol members because this is only one method of building up support, and it has been argued that with some parties enrolling members is less important than other methods of vote gathering (Downs, 1957).

This is simply one set of questions and generalisations that derive

from a classification of parties. These generalisations and others depend on establishing limited categories that cover a range of parties, and on classifications that are increasingly subtle and so point a way to important questions and significant generalisations. Since parties perform a variety of functions of major importance in government, the process of categorising, so that useful generalisations whether about trends of development, methods of operation or many other aspects can be made, has considerable significance for the understanding of politics and government.

2.3.6 CONCLUSION

So far, this unit has covered three major points. First, to understand how governments come to do the things that they do it is necessary to go beyond the formal structure to the informal political institutions comprising political parties and interest groups. Secondly, political parties, while developing along with the emergence of representative government are engaged in a wide range of activities, covering in different ways recruitment, articulation, aggregation, political socialisation and control, and play a major part in consequence in determining how a society is governed. Thirdly, partly because of the major differences between parties it is necessary to classify them if the process of developing useful generalisations is to be advanced.

3 INTEREST GROUPS

3.1 Introduction

Although political parties do not form part of the formal structure of government they are frequently important in determining how power within this structure is exercised or indeed whether the formal structure has a practical significance. Interest groups similarly play an important part in affecting the way a society is governed. Like parties they are informal political institutions in that they do not feature in the formal structure of the state; unlike parties they are by definition bodies that are not directly concerned to control government. Interest groups as one authority has expressed it 'do not assume at least openly the party's basic function of nominating candidates and seeking responsibility for the conduct of government although the division of labour is not always clear cut. Pressure groups may campaign for party candidates and may even become, in fact if not in form, allied with one or the other of the parties. Yet by and large pressure groups, as they seek to influence the exercise of public power, play a distinctive role. They supplement the party system and the formal instruments of government by serving as spokesmen for the special interests within society.' (Key, 1958, p. 22.)

The fact, however, that an interest group is not concerned itself to exercise government does not mean that it has only a minor significance in government. It is not necessary directly to control government to have an important effect on it. Consider this report on the Italian political situation:

It is widely believed in Italy – and the belief is overwhelmingly confirmed by our interviews – that the single most powerful interest group operating in the political system is Catholic Action. . . . The general perception is aptly summarised by one group leader who remarks 'Catholic Action

constitutes a fundamental problem for Italy. That organisation is no longer merely spiritual or apostolic, but an enormous political and economic force in the country. It is an organisation that succeeds in dominating important sectors of Italian society. It wants to control what is written in the newspapers, what kinds of books are published, what kinds of motion pictures are produced, what kinds of programs appear on television, what kinds of recreation we Italians engage in, what kinds of persons are elected to communal councils and parliament, what kinds of individuals will have the opportunity to make careers in public administration – that is, it is interested in everything except spiritual things.' (La Palombara, 1964, pp. 349–51.)

Catholic Action is unusual for its influence in Italy but in many societies individual interest groups, or all of them taken together, have an important effect on how governmental power is exercised.

In the study of interest groups, their different forms, methods and effects, there has been considerable debate about what precisely is to be included in the field of study. Some would say that the terms should be used to describe only those groups which both have a recognisable organisation and are actively involved in seeking to influence public policy. Others would use the term interest group to describe a collection of persons whose only link is a common attitude, or even use it to describe individuals who are as yet without organised existence, but who have shared interests that could bring them together as a group. To enter into this debate would involve too long a digression. Its significance is twofold, first its effect on what is included for comparative analysis in the field of study, and secondly its importance for wider empirical theories about the working of politics in a pluralist society (a point that will be taken up in the radio discussion associated with this unit). Here attention will be directed to groups where there is 'a conscious desire to have public policy . . . move in a particular general or specific direction'. (La Palombara, 1964, p. 16.)

3.2 The Variety of Interest Groups

An indication of the sort of grounds encompassed and of the variety of these can be given by presenting the categorisations that have been made of British interest groups by S. E. Finer (1958, pp. 8–17). He grouped them under eight headings: the business lobby – Institute of Directors, chambers of commerce and the like; the labour lobby composed of trade unions; the Co-operative movement; the professions like the British Medical Association or the Law Society; groups such as the Howard League for Penal Reform or the Association of Municipal Corporations; special sections of the population like the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners Associations; the churches and evangelical groups; and finally educational, recreational and cultural groups like the Society for the Preservation of Rural England. By presenting Finer's categorisation of British interest groups some indication is provided of their range and variety – and there is nothing peculiar about the situation in Britain.

Most of the interest groups mentioned in this list are highly organised bodies with a considerable history of representing particular interests. Take as an example the British Medical Association (Eckstein, 1960). This Association represents the interests of doctors and has a strong organisation covering the whole country – a governing congress – the Representative Body – an elected executive, a staff of permanent officials and local associations covering all member doctors. Most of the other groups listed by

Finer and included in the above categories have similar characteristics in that they have an elected governing council, an elected executive, a permanent body of officials, a local organisation, based on divisions and branches, and they are, like the British Medical Association, continually watching over their members' interests.

Groups like the British Medical Association, or the others mentioned under Finer's categories, are not the only forms of interest group that exist and operate. We will consider briefly three other examples. Take first the instance of the Department of Mines in Southern Rhodesia during the 1930s and 1940s – in this period it constituted an interest group in Rhodesian politics (Murray, 1970, pp. 126–50). A major issue confronting the government at that period was how gold mining was to be encouraged and developed. One approach was that urged by the large capitalised mining companies acting through the Chamber of Mines (an organisation like a chamber of commerce that Finer would have included within his business lobby). They urged that large mining concessions be granted to them. A different outlook was adopted by small workers, individual gold miners who grubbed around for gold, and dug, sifted and washed the gold particles themselves. The small workers acted through their representative body, the Rhodesia Mining Federation, and said that gold mining should be encouraged by the government giving subsidies to small workers and providing them with cheap African labour and machinery. The Department of Mines – the relevant government department – pressed a third alternative which involved providing the Department with the finance and legal authority to run the operation itself. In public debate, in private reports and papers, and in evidence to a Commission of Inquiry, the Department pressed its cause, and here it was acting as an interest group. The Department was not a group that was organised for the representation of an interest in the way that the British Medical Association or Rhodesia Chamber of Mines was. It was organised as an administrative department of government, but the Department acted on this occasion as an interest group in Rhodesian politics. It was an organisation established for a different purpose that acted as an interest group in Southern Rhodesian politics in order to develop the Department as the means of expanding gold production.

A second and different example of an interest group might be taken from the Tiv-speaking people of Nigeria.¹ Among them, one of the commonest groupings is according to family lineage – all those descended from a particular ancestor exist as a group within the society and operate to influence public policy to favour their particular lineage. In the local political organisation of the Tiv the lineage acts as an interest group seeking to influence the outcome of law cases and in other ways affect public decisions. On the larger stage of the federal state of Nigeria members of a lineage tend to focus their attention on fellow members of the lineage who occupy public offices and thus to use family connections to influence the direction of public decisions.

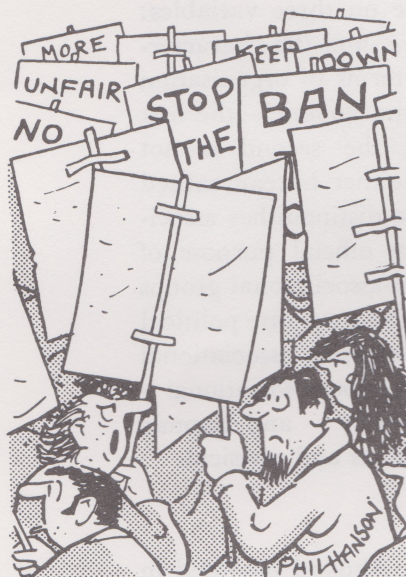
A final example of a human group that is frequently treated as an interest group, though on the surface its difference from an organisa-

1 The Tiv will be discussed further in Unit 26.

tion such as the British Medical Association is considerable, is a mob or a demonstration. Riots or demonstrations may be inspired and directed by organised bodies but they may occur spontaneously. Consider for instance this account of riots and demonstrations in Italy:

As a matter of practice, most such occurrences in Italy are the premeditated work of political parties or voluntary associations. Pregnant women, for example, do not spontaneously appear lying prone on roads leading from Montecatini sulphur mines in order to keep trucks from passing. [On the other hand, it is not clear] that all riots that broke out in 1959 at ceremonies to commemorate the Resistance Movement were carefully organised by Neo-Fascist or Monarchist organisations. Similarly some of the demonstrations that occurred when the issue of Trieste reached explosive proportions evidently bordered on complete spontaneity in the sense that people were reacting to information communicated by the mass media. (La Palombara, 1964, p. 82.)

Mobs or demonstrations therefore require study as a further example of group activity and not simply as a method for advancing the interests of an organised group. They are markedly different from organisations like the British Medical Association, or the Southern Rhodesian Department of Mines, but nevertheless, they can have the basic attributes of an interest group.



"This is the worst organised spontaneous demonstration, I've ever been in."

Figure 25.4

3.3 Classification of Interest Groups

These instances indicate the variety of interest groups, and they can be classified in many ways. As with political parties it could be in terms of their objectives. One distinction that has been used, though it does not always strictly apply, is that between groups based on common interests and others founded on common support for a cause: e.g. the British Medical Association representing doctors, compared with the Howard League for Penal Reform representing those who support the cause of prison reform. Other classifications are based on the nature of membership or the methods used. Probably the most widely adopted classification, however, is

one in which four categories are differentiated: *associational*, *institutional*, *non-associational* and *anomic*.¹

Associational interest groups are those which exist as a specialised structure built around the objective of giving expression to the interests of members; organisations like the British Medical Association or Rhodesia Chamber of Mines are examples.

Institutional groups is used to refer to organisations that have an existence and purpose apart from articulating interests but which also become involved in seeking to influence public policy. The Department of Mines in Rhodesia was one such example, another, and frequently a particularly significant one, is the army. Both are institutions that are created for purposes far removed from advancing political interests, but they may become involved in politics in the way that the Department of Mines did in Southern Rhodesia.

Thirdly, *non-associational interest groups* is used by Almond to refer to religious, class or lineage groups, a category which is illustrated by the Tiv family lineage. These are groups which, like institutional groups, have an existence independent from that of articulating interests, but which, unlike institutional groups, lack a bureaucratic structure and tend to act informally and intermittently.

Finally, *anomic interest groups* cover mobs, riots and demonstrations: 'more or less spontaneous breakthroughs into the political system . . .' (Almond and Coleman, 1960, p. 24.)

Almond's classification is founded therefore on three variables: the form or basis of organisation, the objective, and the characteristic methods employed. He distinguishes in terms of organisation between the associational, non-associational and anomic – the first is permanent and generally bureaucratised, the second is not bureaucratised but permanent, the third is neither bureaucratised nor permanent. On the basis of objectives, he distinguishes associational which are created with the primary official purpose of advancing interests, from institutional and non-associational groups which exist for some other stated purpose but may acquire political objectives. While in terms of methods he distinguishes associational and institutional groups on the one hand from non-associational – which tend to act informally and intermittently – and anomic which are characteristically irregular, spontaneous and physical.

3.4 Channels of Access and Methods

The growing attention to interest groups that Almond recorded in his Research Note (reprinted in the *Reader*, pp. 459–71) derived in a measure from the important part they play in determining how government is conducted. The critical function of interest groups to which Almond draws attention is that of articulation. We have already seen that this is an activity in which political parties engage, but it is peculiarly a function of interest groups. Interest groups give expression to desires, expectations and grievances, and they communicate claims to policy makers seeking to influence them in the decisions they take. Whatever the form of the state, whether it has

¹ These categories were originally set out in G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman, *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton, 1960, p. 33; they are further described in G. A. Almond and G. B. Powell, *Comparative Politics*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966, pp. 73–8. These writings represent a development of the ideas set out initially in G. A. Almond, 'A Comparative Study of Interest Groups and the Political Process', in the *Reader*, pp. 459–71.

an authoritarian government or a limited constitutional one or whether indeed – as will be considered later – there is government without the state, interest groups are actively expressing demands, seeking to influence public policy and affecting how legitimate power is exercised. The extent of their activities, their means of access and the techniques of influence they employ differ from society to society, but interest groups are significant informal political institutions everywhere.

While interest groups are pervasive political institutions, they are more extensively organised and active in some areas than in others. Moreover it can be argued that interest groups are not necessarily equally representatives of all sections of the society. In Britain consumers have not, at least till recently, been effectively organised, nor have migrant workers in the United States, and in Southern Rhodesia interest group activity among Africans up to the late 1940s was largely confined to chiefs, teachers and preachers. How far it is valid to speak of such unequal representation through interest group activity and the significance of this for theories of democratic government is a point that will be discussed in the radio broadcast associated with this unit.

The way in which interest groups operate clearly depends on the nature of the group, the political culture of the society and the formal and informal political structure. In general terms there are three ways in which they can operate. First, an interest group can seek to *influence indirectly* those who determine public policy by arousing public interest and support for action for a particular cause, thus trusting to general lines of communication between the public and the government to convey a demand. In the United States, for instance, Martin Luther King effectively used the mass media to arouse public demands for improvements in the position of blacks and an end to discrimination. In Peru, to take a second example, Labour groups have made demonstrations and mass violence an established and effective instrument for influencing the government.

A second way in which interest groups operate is *through political parties*. Interest groups may be formally associated with a party, they may sponsor certain candidates as do British Trade Unions, or establish links with officials or party members. They may canvass causes in party forums: the variety of methods is considerable. The objective however is to secure the adoption of an interest group's cause as the policy of the party as a whole, or at least as an aim of a section of the party.

Finally, the most pervasive and important method is by *direct action* on the government. It is a general characteristic of interest groups that they focus their attention on those parts of government where the power relevant to their objective lies. In Britain, where much of the relevant power is concentrated in the executive, activity is directed towards the executive ministries. In the United States where power in the federal government is more diffused, interest groups spread their attention over each of the major branches of government including the Supreme Court. Where governmental power is highly decentralised, interest groups tend similarly to be localised, concentrating on those in the locality with effective power. In British Colonial Africa, for instance, the critical power frequently lay with the local district commissioners, and interest groups tended to be organised and, therefore, to operate at the level of the district. Where the power appropriate to a group's interests lies, this becomes

the focus of the group's attention.

The means by which a group secures access to a relevant concentration of power depends once more on the society and on the character of the group. Informal communication networks, based for instance on family, class or neighbourhood links, are common and important. Authorised access exists in the American Congress through a system of licensed agents. In Britain, Southern Rhodesia and in many other countries, access is institutionalised through the use of advisory committees to government departments. Anomic interest groups are provided with outlets through provisions for petitioning the legislature, lobbying its members or simply by being provided with a place like Hyde Park Corner where they can address a crowd – or address the single tourist observing the sights of London. The ways in which interest groups gain access and influence public policy are multifarious, but as Almond indicates in his research note on interest groups, particular ways are characteristic of different societies.

The same points are true of the methods used by interest groups to exert an influence. First, specific techniques are appropriate to particular sorts of interest groups. A riot or demonstration, for instance, does not have the full-time organisation of an associational interest group and lacks the capacity to collect a mass of information to bolster a case. Secondly, in every society the culture establishes limits within which interest groups have to operate. Thus, as an example, in one society bribing public officials is an effective technique, in another an attempt at bribing discredits those concerned. Or to give a second example, in Peru we have seen that it is an established technique for labour groups to threaten and if necessary to employ riots as a means of coercing government.

The further critical point about the methods available to interest groups is that they derive from the power of the interest groups themselves. We have discussed the activities of interest groups because of their significance for understanding why government acts as it does. They affect the way in which government power is exercised: theirs is not however simply a one-way relationship, for they control power themselves. Where there is representative government, interest groups speak for a body of electors who have the opportunity to vote for or against the government: the army as an institutionalised interest group has the power of the gun, or, as a third example, the British Medical Association speaks for the great body of general practitioners on whose co-operation the government depends for manning the National Health Service. Governments necessarily take account of this power and frequently seek to use it for their own purposes. It is this that provides interest groups with the political weight to operate to influence government.

3.5 Conclusion

Interest groups therefore supplement the activities of political parties, and in this section three major points have been made about them. First the importance of interest groups has been emphasised as bodies influencing the way in which legitimate power is exercised in society. Secondly, an indication has been given of the great variety of interest groups, and one system of categorising them – into associational, institutional, non-associational, and anomic groups – has been explained. Finally an introduction has

been provided to the channels of access and methods of influencing government employed by interest groups.

4 POLITICAL PARTIES, INTEREST GROUPS AND GOVERNMENT

4.1 Introduction

So far, attention in this unit has been concentrated on three general points: first, the significance of parties and interest groups for determining how power in states is exercised; secondly, the variety both of parties and interest groups that exist in societies; and, thirdly, the ways in which these parties and interest groups can be differentiated and categorised. The analysis of informal political institutions and the part they play in affecting the way government operates can, however, be taken a stage further. Parties, interest groups and factions are interacting with each other and with the formal structure of government; they are all part of the process of politics and government, and the way they interact in each individual society produces characteristic patterns of activity. The political process in a particular society is peculiar to it, but while being unique it will have more in common with the process in certain societies than in others. The political process in Southern Rhodesia, for instance, has much in common with that in South Africa, and there are many points of similarity between Australia and Canada, and both of these two are strikingly different from the Ivory Coast or Albania. Indeed, by identifying the major features of parties and interest groups, and analysing the characteristic relationships between these informal political institutions, and between them and the formal structure, it is possible to produce a typology of the political processes in states.

4.2 Single Party, Two-party and Multiparty Party Systems

Before attention began to be directed by political scientists to the study of interest groups, the established categories covering informal political institutions and formal structure concentrated attention on the number of parties. Here, as Neumann explains, the first division came between the single party system and those where there were two or more. The assumption was that the single party was dictatorial. If it was a single party system, the single party could not be a party of competition, for it had nothing with which to compete.

The equation of single party state with dictatorship and with party of control is something against which Neumann correctly warns. It may be convenient to speak of a single party system but it is an expression that minimises the wide differences possible in states where there is only a single party. Carter and Herz point to the important difference between existing single party totalitarian states and the situation in certain developing countries where, while one-party regimes have predominated, individual enterprise is encouraged and opposition tolerated. The difference is highlighted in a comparison of one feature of the single party states of the USSR and Tanzania. (Carter and Herz, 1961, p. 127.) In the Soviet Union the party is, as the quotation from Fainsod (p. 55 above) made clear, one of control. Elections are held, but they are not occasions for competition. In Tanzania, the law allows only a single party, but the Constitution of the country, and the practice of the party and the country's rulers allow for, and encourage, com-

petition between candidates in elections. Thus section 28 of the Constitution of Tanzania runs:

The Constitution of Tanzania, Chapter III The Executive and Legislature of the United Republic

S28 - (1) Constituency members shall be elected by the People in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and, subject thereto, the provisions of an Act of Parliament for regulating the election of constituency members to the National Assembly.

(2) Candidates for an election in a constituency shall be required to be:

- (a) nominated at a primary nomination by not less than twenty-five persons registered in that constituency at the time of nomination as voters for the purpose of elections by the People: and
- (b) subsequent to such primary nomination, approved or, if more than two candidates are so nominated, selected by the National Executive Committee of the Party in accordance with the following provisions of this section.

(3) Where less than three candidates are nominated at a primary nomination for an election in a constituency, the National Executive Committee shall, unless it is satisfied that the election procedure up to the time when its approval is sought (as prescribed by Act of Parliament and such rules of the Party as are not inconsistent therewith) has not been properly complied with, approve the candidate, or, where are two, both candidates for the purposes of this section.

(4) Where more than two candidates are nominated at a primary nomination for an election in a constituency:

- (a) a meeting of the Annual District Conference of the Party for the district in which the constituency is situated shall be convened, and each member of that Conference present at the meeting may cast a preference by secret ballot for one of the persons so nominated; and
- (b) the names of the persons so nominated (together with a certificate declaring the number of votes accorded to each at such ballot) shall be submitted to the National Executive Committee by the Returning Officer, and that Committee shall, unless it is satisfied that the election procedure up to the time of such submission (as prescribed as aforesaid) has not been properly complied with, select by secret ballot two persons so nominated as the candidates to contest the election in that constituency, and (unless the election is countermanded in accordance with any Act of Parliament in that behalf) the persons so selected shall be the candidates at that election in the constituency, and no other person shall be a candidate thereat.

(5) In the exercise of its functions under this section, the National Executive Committee shall not:

- (a) in any case where two or more candidates have been nominated for election in a constituency, approve or select one candidate only for such constituency;
- (b) be bound to make any selection in accordance with the order of preference indicated by the votes of the members of a meeting of an Annual District Conference.

In Tanzania conflict and competition were thought not to be capable of being contained within the formal structure and to present a danger to it. The aim therefore, was to prevent destructive conflict by permitting only a single party, but, nevertheless, to allow competition between candidates in elections. This is furthermore only a single example, but it does serve to suggest that more cannot be read into the category of single party state than that there is a single party.

Beyond this distinction between single party systems and ones where there is more than one party the important differentiation is between two-party and multiparty systems. As Neumann explains, significant inferences can be drawn from the fact that there are two

competing parties, or a multiplicity of parties, and, as he wrote, 'a two-party rule promises greater efficiency for the democratic process'. Much attention has in consequence been directed to isolating the particular conditions which encourage a two-party as against a multiparty system; and here particular emphasis has been placed on the effects of the voting system. Single member constituencies, with elections being determined on the basis of a simple majority, are represented as encouraging two national parties; proportional representation in contrast favours a multiplicity of parties.

Again, however, there are problems in what may look like a meaningful and useful distinction. Both Britain and America, for example, may be considered to have two-party systems. In Britain the major feature of politics might be seen as the struggle between the Conservative and Labour parties while in the United States there is competition between the Democratic and Republican parties. On the surface, both might be described as having two-party systems, but there is a striking contrast between the parties in the two countries. In Britain the two major parties are relatively integrated, united and disciplined, but after reading Chapter four in Levine and Cornwell it might be thought more to the point to say that because of the nature of the two American parties there is a multiparty system operating there. A similar contrast could be drawn between the multiparty system in the fourth French Republic, and that in Sweden where the system operates to produce consequences more comparable with the situation in Britain.

Distinctions between the way politics works in different societies have often been founded on the number of political parties that there are, and on the way in which they interact. There are however obvious difficulties in this approach, and some of the simpler correlations that have been made – between for instance, one-party and dictatorship, and two-party and strong stable government – are false. More has to be taken into account for meaningful and useful typologies to be constructed.

4.3 The Political Processes Seen as a Whole

For all the importance of parties, to differentiate the political process of states according to the number of parties operating is no more adequate than to distinguish between states simply on the basis of formal structure. Parties are only one among a number of institutions involved in the whole process of determining how the power of the state is to be employed. The same is true of interest groups. To seek to distinguish between the political processes of states simply on the basis of the characteristics of a part, whether it is the formal structure, parties or interest groups, is bound to be incomplete. If the political processes of societies are to be classified in a way that allows for meaningful questions to be raised and generalisations to be explored, they have to take account of the whole process, and see formal structures and a variety of informal political institutions in the context of a whole political process.

It was the main objective of Professor Almond's Research Note on a Comparative Study of Interest Groups and the Political Process to prepare the ground for a classification founded on the whole political process in states. While the attempt to categorise political processes in societies derived from the attention given to interest groups, there was a desire explicitly to avoid the danger of

stating or implying that what explains everything about politics is, not the formal structure of the political parties, but the character of the interest groups. Almond and his associates were not arguing that one particular sort of political institution was more important than another, and thus the key to all understanding. What Almond did argue was that to differentiate in a useful way between the political processes in separate societies involved looking at the whole range of political institutions and at the complex patterns of relations between them, and that one approach to doing this was to take one particular type of political institution and look at the characteristic relationships between this type and other political institutions involved in the political process. The approach could have been made through some other type of political institution, through, that is, formal political institutions or parties, but Almond and his associates chose to approach the whole political process through interest groups.

4.4 Putting the Process of Classifying to Use

As I indicated above, categorising and classifying is a justifiable exercise to the extent that it deepens understanding. It is useless to do so unless at the minimum it aids communication – and some of the activity given over to inventing new concepts and categories seems rather to hamper communication by adding more words and more muddle. A greater justification, however, is that categorising and classifying can highlight differences and similarities, and, by taking more into account in making comparisons and formulating classifications, differences and similarities that are not immediately perceived are uncovered. This in its turn leads to questions being asked about why such differences or similarities might exist, and what is the relationship between a particular difference and some other feature of the political process.

The article by Almond, while attempting to differentiate the political process in different societies, by looking at interest groups and the relations between them and other political institutions, also illustrates a group of scholars at work employing an approach



Figure 25.5

based on categorising, classifying and comparing. Besides presenting substantive, if tentative, conclusions about interest groups and the political process, the article is also a report on the way a gathering of scholars set about seeking to advance understanding; and thus besides considering the substantive conclusions presented in the article it is instructive to observe the use made of the method of classifying and comparing. You may notice, for example, the justification provided for categorising interest groups in different societies in terms of particular characteristics; and it will be clear how distinguishing particular sorts of interest groups suggests questions to explore.

5 CONCLUSION

This course narrative and its associated reading has provided an introduction to informal political institutions. Carrying forward the previous account of the formal structure of government in societies, it has discussed the characteristics of the major informal political institutions, it has indicated their importance in the political process through which decisions are taken about how legitimate power should be exercised in society. It has also shown how, to understand the political process and distinguish the different political processes in separate states, it is important to view the political process as a whole and to see a part, whether it is the legislature, a political party or an interest group, in the context of its place in the whole.

This unit has also had two other concerns. First it has been using, explaining and justifying a particular approach to advancing understanding. In order to introduce knowledge about informal political institutions, it has been categorising, classifying and comparing; and while employing this method it has explained how the method helps to advance understanding. Finally, through the associated reading in Levine and Cornwell, the unit has shown how the general ideas discussed are employed to provide an understanding of the government of a single society, namely, the United States.

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University of Chicago Press for S. NEUMANN, *Modern Political Parties*.

Daily Express for Fig. 25.1; *Daily Mirror* for Figs. 25.4 and 5.

Unit 26

Government and Politics Without the State



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GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS WITHOUT THE STATE

1 INTRODUCTION

In this section so far our study of politics and government has all been within the framework of the state – in societies, in other words, which (like Britain, the United States or India) have a formally instituted government and specialised political organs within a specific territorial area.¹ In such contexts, it seems natural for the study of government and politics to focus on such things as constitutions and the formal governmental structure; even the analysis of informal institutions like political parties or interest groups has tended to look at them from the point of view of their relationships to the constituted government of the country (like Parliament in Britain).

There are a number of assumptions which have helped to make this focus on the state seem a reasonable one. First, most political scientists have (till recently at least) been brought up in societies in which this type of government was taken for granted – and in politics as in everything else, what we are used to seems ‘natural’.² Thus recent Western-type political institutions seemed the ‘natural’ subject for political scientists to concentrate on – as well, of course, as being a topic of obvious practical importance. Second, this kind of approach received apparent support from some of the writings of political philosophers – of whom Hobbes was one example³ – who, in effect, held that the state is an essential prerequisite for any kind of ordered human society.

More recently, however, these assumptions have begun to be questioned. Research in non-Western societies by social anthropologists⁴ and (to a lesser extent) political scientists has shown that, contrary to our usual assumptions and experience, politics and government are possible without the state. It has been discovered that there are certain societies in Africa and elsewhere in which there is no ‘state’ – in other words, no formally instituted government and constituted political officials; no formal bureaucracy; and no system of centralised rule. Yet without chiefs or kings these societies can apparently maintain some kind of unity and ordered political life.

This discovery necessarily leads to radical rethinking of some of the earlier assumptions of political science. Thus the study of these societies which function without the state is not only of interest for

1 On the concept of ‘state’, see Unit 24, pp. 15–21.

2 A point already made in earlier weeks in connection with socialisation and the family.

3 See the discussion of Hobbes in Unit 2, and T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, esp. chapter 17.

4 For most of the first part of this unit I am using the term ‘social anthropologist’ (even though elsewhere I prefer the more inclusive word ‘sociologist’), since this is the term commonly used, by both themselves and others, to describe those who have studied ‘stateless’ systems in non-industrial societies. In the more general discussion later in this unit, however, I shall revert to the wider term ‘sociologist’ to cover both those who study non-industrial and those who study industrial societies.

its own sake, but also for its implications for the subject of political science and our assumptions about the nature of political activity. This week is therefore devoted to the study of these 'stateless societies'. What are they? How do they function? And why are they important in political science?

2 WHAT ARE 'STATELESS' SOCIETIES?

The idea of a society having government and yet not having the apparatus of a state even in rudimentary form seems at first sight very odd to those brought up in Western cultures. We take for granted the necessity of having a hierarchy of power, and a series of officials to implement the government of the society, and it is hard to imagine that a society with no equivalent institutions to these – no authoritative chiefs, no hierarchy of officials, no centralised power – can really possess government and politics in any real sense.

This was indeed the initial reaction of one of the first writers to introduce the term 'stateless society', the social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard. He first went to the field intending to make a comparison between the political system of one particular group in the southern Sudan and that of a neighbouring and highly organised state which he had studied earlier. On his arrival he found himself at a loss. The people had no kings, no centralised power, no specialised political officials, no chiefs, no organised administration. It would have been easy just to have dismissed them as 'savages', or without any concept of political order. Gradually, however, through the slow process of living in the area and observing what went on around him he discovered that despite all these negative points, there was indeed a system of order, a political system in the society (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). It was following on this discovery that social anthropologists began to talk about a 'stateless society'.

2.1 The Tiv political system

Because the whole idea is a strange one to most of us, it is helpful to look at one particular example of this kind of society in some detail. Until one knows a little about the detailed working of a society like this it is hard to imagine that this sort of system really is viable.

The example I have chosen is the stateless political system of the Tiv people of northern Nigeria. In one way there is perhaps nothing particularly special about the Tiv. They are just one example of a type of political system that occurs fairly widely in Africa and (to some extent) elsewhere. But they are a particularly good example for our purposes. They have been written about in an authoritative and a lively way by two social anthropologists – Paul and Laura Bohannan; they are more accessible than some other examples of stateless societies so that it has been possible to get recent film to illustrate this account; and they are accepted among social anthropologists as a particularly clear example of one type of stateless society. This section will therefore explain how in Tiv country government and politics are possible without the state.¹

¹ The account here is supplemented by the brief extract from Paul Bohannan's description (pp. 472 ff. in the *Reader*) and by the filmed material in the television programme. Reference to some further written sources on the Tiv are given throughout this section and at the end of the unit.

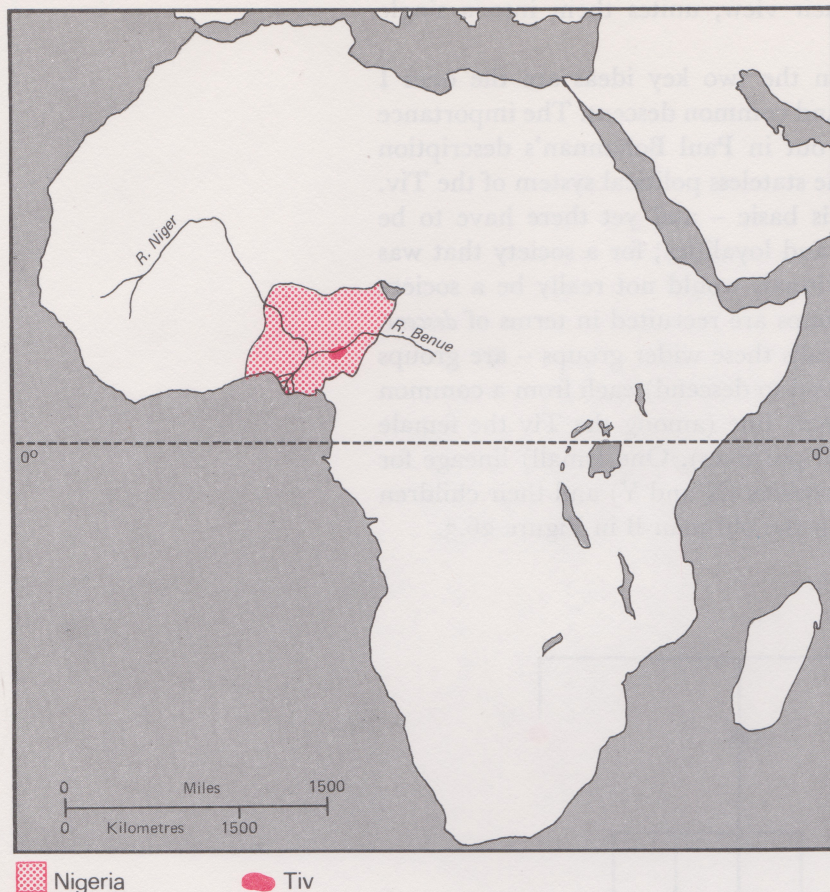


Figure 26.1 Map of Africa showing position of Tiv people of Nigeria

The Tiv are a large pagan group – about one million people in all – living in northern Nigeria. They now come within the framework of the modern federation of Nigeria and are administered as such. The description here, however, is of their traditional political system as described by social anthropologists – one which is still to some extent relevant and effective among the Tiv.

In the traditional political system of the Tiv, this large group was not united by the common authority of a king or a centralised government of any sort. In fact beyond the head of a compound (a cluster of seven or eight huts) there were no officials of any sort in Tiv country. The stress everywhere was on equality rather than authority or hierarchy. The Tiv all felt conscious of belonging to one people, however, because they believed that they were descended from a single ancestor, named Tiv. It is this bond of their believed



Figure 26.2 A Tiv compound

common descent which, in their view, unites them into a single people.

In Tiv political organisation the two key ideas are the ones I have just mentioned: equality and common descent. The importance of these two ideas is brought out in Paul Bohannan's description (in the *Reader*, pp. 472 ff.) of the stateless political system of the Tiv. Equality between individuals is basic – and yet there have to be ways of forming wider groups and loyalties; for a society that was made up just of separate individuals would not really be a society at all. These wider political groups are recruited in terms of *descent*. The 'lineages' – as Bohannan calls these wider groups – are groups descended (or at any rate believed to descend) each from a common ancestor, traced through the male line (among the Tiv the female line is unimportant for political purposes). One (small) lineage for instance might consist of two brothers (X and Y) and their children all of whom are descended from the old man B in Figure 26.3.

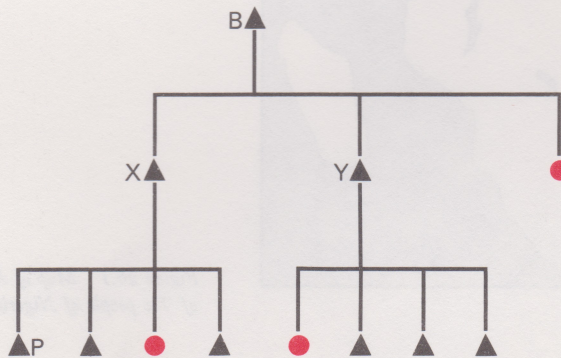


Figure 26.3 One small lineage (Lineage I)¹

(Women are included among the lineage members, but their descendants are not, since the female line is irrelevant for tracing lineages.) A small lineage is therefore not unlike a large extended family – the members here are all one lineage because they are all descended from a single ancestor, B. A second lineage might consist of all those descended from a different man, C. Here too the links are through the male line, and the key to the loyalty of all the co-members of this lineage (lineage II) is again expressed in terms of descent – common descent from C (Fig. 26.4).

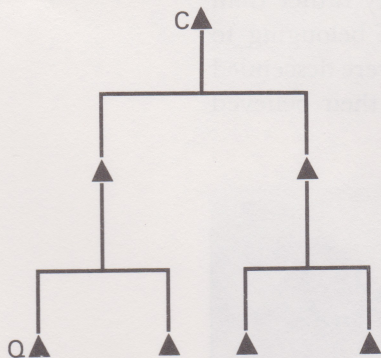


Figure 26.4 Another small lineage (Lineage II)²

¹ For this conventional way of representing kinship relationships see Unit 9, p. 85. As in the diagrams there, Δ refers to a man, O to a woman.

² The same convention is used as before, but in this case all women are omitted (since they are not important for tracing descent among the Tiv) – another common practice in such diagrams.

A man's loyalty and political allegiance in Tivland is to the lineage he belongs to. Thus the Tiv political system is composed of a large number of these political groups.

Lineage groups also correspond to territorial divisions. This means that the Tiv see their country as being divided up into a number of political divisions which can be drawn on the ground but are described by the Tiv themselves in a genealogical idiom, in other words in terms of *descent*. For recruitment to political groups, then, the Tiv political system has to be seen in terms of lineage loyalties.

Another way of putting this statement – that the basic political groups are lineages – is to say that it is through lineages that the Tiv political system performs the function of formulating (or articulating) interests, claims or demands for political action.¹ In some societies this function of interest articulation may be performed

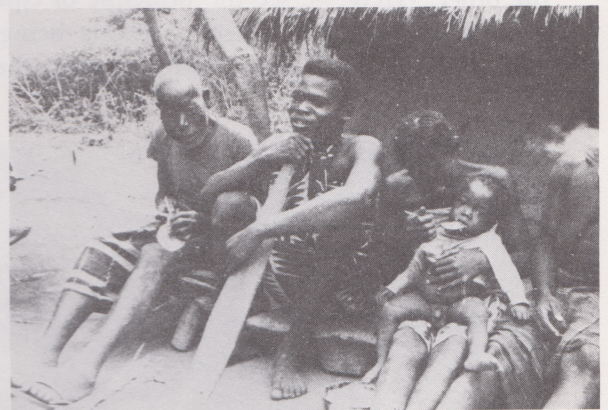


Figure 26.5 Some Tiv individuals

by such groups as institutional interest groups like armies or churches or by associational interest groups like trade unions. Among the Tiv the function of interest articulation is performed by lineages.²

Another function performed by lineages within the Tiv political system is obviously that of political socialisation. This is a general topic that will be explored in the following unit,³ but it can be said here that in any society the socialisation of the young into the political ways of the society – an important factor in the general tendency for political systems to perpetuate themselves through time – takes place largely within the family. In some societies, like America or Britain for example, political socialisation also takes place outside the family (through school, work, mass media, political parties and so on). But among the Tiv this function can be achieved almost completely within the lineage – for lineages are both a kind of family *and* the political groups of the society. It is easy for people to grow up within this lineage and then imbibe the various attitudes to the political system, political values, ways of acting and so on that make up the local political culture.

1 This kind of analysis in terms of *function* is a popular one among many political scientists and sociologists today (as may well have emerged from previous units) and is an illuminating one to apply to the Tiv. For discussion of the concept 'political' see Unit 27 (ii).

2 See the discussion of the function of various groups in articulating interests in Unit 25.

3 A general discussion of the process of socialisation has also occurred in earlier psychology units (6–8).

The basic structure of the Tiv political system is thus based on the political groups Bohannan calls 'lineages'. However we also need to know more about how this works out in practice. So Bohannan also discusses the question of social control: how do the Tiv deal with settling disputes, maintaining order, limiting the spread of warfare? This is an important point since Bohannan considers that the basic function of a political system is 'to control law and warfare – the exercise of power' (see the *Reader*, p. 474).

If there is a dispute between two individuals each is supported by his own lineage. Thus, if, say, P in Figure 26.3 quarrels with Q in Figure 26.4 they will be backed up by, respectively, Lineage I and Lineage II as a whole.

Now a dispute like this gives rise to a difficult situation, for each lineage is seen by the Tiv as being basically equal to each corresponding one. Thus Lineage I and Lineage II are conceived of as equal to each other, with neither having the right or duty to give orders to the other. (Here we see the principle of equality coming in again; there is no idea of hierarchy, of one being above the other.) So neither lineage has the authority to judge the dispute itself. Nor are



Figure 26.6 Disagreement in a Tiv 'moot'

there any formal officials to impose a verdict as between P and Q. Nevertheless the situation must be dealt with. What happens is that a 'moot' is called. This is similar to a court (in fact in modern administrative terms such a meeting tends to be identified with a formal court) but with the difference that its aim is to reach an accommodation between the two sides rather than to apply laws or decide what is the right verdict in a particular case.¹ There are no formal judges in a moot but the elders of the community take a leading part. Not only the dispute itself but all the grievances between the two sides are brought out into the open and aired. The

¹ When the dispute is between closely related individuals or lineage segments the meeting is less formalised but can still be described as a 'moot' even under the present administrative system of also having more formal courts; whereas with disputes between more distant lineages the meeting is more akin to a court (and nowadays would be a court). Bohannan however apparently uses the term 'moot' to refer to both types of meeting when describing the traditional system (*Reader*, p. 475).

point of the moot is not to sentence one or other of the two contenders, but to bring about harmony between the two sides, mediated by the elders.

The moot then ends, not with a verdict, but with a ritual of reconciliation; for a dispute is believed to present a religious problem as well as a political one. What happens in a moot is that, as the Tiv put it, they 'repair the *tar*' (the *tar* is the territory associated with a lineage and also, by extension, the group living there). The mediation of the elders has affected a cure in the bad social relations that were spoiling the harmony of the group. Bohannan (1957, p. 2) sums it up: 'Repairing tar is government'.

This might make it seem as if there are after all authoritative officials among the Tiv – the elders. But this would be the wrong conclusion to draw. It is true that elders can be influential and can (some of them) provide leadership. But the confrontation is between two lineages (not between elders and people) and it is the knowledge that each of these two sides is strong and unlikely to step down without some face-saving device that makes the members of each opposing lineage willing to listen to the words of reason uttered by the elders. The elders represent the voice of public opinion; they are the vehicles of a reconciliation that all in the long run desire however angry they are for the moment. But the elders are not officials, they have no automatic authority and they have no power to *command*.

The general pattern is conveyed in a brief description by Laura Bohannan. It is in fact taken from the novel she wrote (under a pen-name) about her experiences among the Tiv and is in the context of a hand-to-hand fight rather than a moot. Nevertheless the importance of public opinion comes through clearly.

It took great provocation to make them really lose control. Each man had a chip on his shoulder and believed the whole world ready to knock it off. Self-respect demanded that each show himself unafraid to fight. Only a coward would back down before his opponent. However, to give in to public opinion was common decency. Therefore, at the sound of furious altercation people rushed to combat, each gripping the wrist of the other, dagger at the throat of one, club over the head of the other – a magnificent display of matched strength. Only their eyes, cocked audience-ward, told that they were both waiting for someone to say, 'Gentlemen, gentlemen!' Then, skin and reputation alike undamaged, they could air their grievances and accept arbitration without loss of face. Public opinion was police, judge and jury, and its expression in ridicule or ostracism made other punishment unnecessary (E. Smith Bowen, 1964, p. 209.)

It is not only at the level of quarrels between individuals or disputes between small lineages that we find an outward show of strength combined with an awareness of public opinion. We have seen that an individual can belong to a small lineage – of the type represented as Lineage I and Lineage II in Figures 26.3 and 26.4. But there are also wider lineages. Lineage I and Lineage II may combine together (to form Lineage III) if they share a common ancestor further back – A for example.

This large lineage group will join up together if it is a question of opposing someone from a totally different group (different, that is, in terms of territory and of descent). So we would have Lineage III (made up of what we can now call its two 'segments', which in other contexts would be the separate Lineages I and II), as opposed to yet another similar group (Lineage IV). Again the two opposing lineages are considered equal to each other, balanced in terms of strength and status. Again, conflict is brought into the open as

between these two lineages but public opinion limits it there and prevents it spreading further. In each of the large groups the interests of all the smaller constituent ones are fused and joined – so

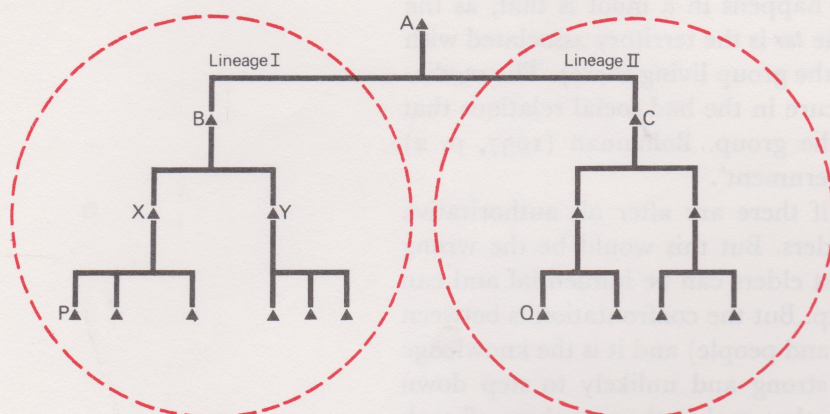


Figure 26.7 Lineage III¹

in a sense the function of ‘interest aggregation’ (combining of interests into a common general policy) is being performed through this large lineage group. The same kind of principle operates in larger and larger groups, each group balancing its opposing one. When two individuals of very different areas and lineages are in conflict, then large groups are involved; lineages III and IV, for instance, might fuse *together* to form lineage V, joining in opposition to lineage VI. When individuals more closely connected conflict the wider lineage group may split up into smaller lineages – say III against IV, or even I against II, with the wider groups keeping out of it.

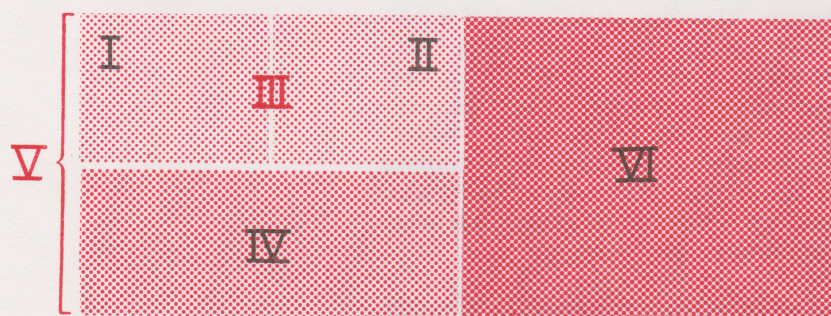


Figure 26.8 Fission and fusion of lineages (Lineage V is united in opposition to Lineage VI, but internally it is subdivided into two opposing segments (III and IV). III and IV are each similarly united when opposed to each other, but again are subdivided internally: III, for instance, splits into segments I and II)

This process of splitting (or segmenting) apart and joining together according to the situation is often called ‘fission and fusion’. It is through this process that the different divisions of the Tiv political system balance each other according to the principles of equality and of descent and that social order is maintained in Tiv country without any of the usual institutions of the state.

A fuller account of certain aspects of the Tiv political system can be found in the extract by Bohannan in the *Reader* (p. 472 ff.) supplemented by the television programme. But it is not so much the details of the description there (or here) that matter, as the basic

¹ Only the male members of the lineages are shown on this diagram.

point: that is that in Tiv society (as in other stateless systems) a political system can exist and maintain itself without the state. There are political groups (the lineages) in which loyalties are focussed and opinions expressed – in other words, interest articulation.¹ Social control and the maintenance of order is also achieved through the lineages – or rather by the balancing of equal and opposed lineages and lineage segments of wider or narrower scale according to the situation and their confrontation in moots and courts. It is true that moots do not ‘administer law’ in the formal or strict sense of ‘law’. But they are concerned with settling disputes in accordance with the accepted norms of society – which in the wide sense are the equivalent of ‘laws’ elsewhere. So, looked at in functional terms, we can observe here yet another function of government – ‘Rule adjudication’.

Here then we have yet another case where the outward forms are very different (contrast the Tiv political system with that of the United States!) but when we consider the situation in terms of *function*, we discover some underlying similarities.² The Tiv political system, in its own way, performs some of the same functions as that of the United States or Britain. In particular we have detected the functions of interest aggregation, interest articulation, political socialisation and recruitment, and rule adjudication.

Looking at the political system in terms of function also enables us to detect contrasts as well as similarities. In most industrial countries the various functions of the political system (those we have just discussed plus others to be mentioned in later units) tend to be performed by different and specialised agencies. In Britain, for example, rule adjudication is the sphere of the judiciary; interests are articulated in various special groups like political parties, churches, or trade unions; political socialisation goes on not only in the family but in schools, clubs or work places. All these spheres are relatively clear-cut and differentiated. Among the Tiv, by contrast, not only do the functions tend to overlap but the groups that perform them tend to be the same in each case – the lineages. So the concept of function helps us to contrast as well as to compare the different kind of political system here.

Perhaps the main point is that what we are contrasting and comparing are two instances of *the same general category: political system*. Despite the differences, the political system of the Tiv and of Great Britain can both be analysed by applying the concept of function.

2.2 Other stateless political systems

The Tiv are not an isolated example. There are a number of societies which have rather similar types of political system in which the basic groups are lineages.³ There are also other kinds of stateless societies based on groups other than lineages.⁴ It is not possible to describe

1 Discussed earlier in Unit 25, p. 52.

2 Cf. the same method applied to the analysis of the family in Unit 9.

3 See e.g. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1940; J. Middleton and D. Tait (eds), *Tribes without rulers*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958; various of the essays in E. E. Evans-Pritchard and M. Fortes (eds) *African political systems*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961 (1st ed. 1940).

4 Contrary to what used to be assumed it is now known that not all non-industrial societies have a social organisation based primarily on ‘kinship’ (or descent).

these in any detail or indeed worth mastering the detail in the present context – but a brief account of some of them will help to give some idea of the range of these types of political system.

One type is that known as the ‘age set system’. In such societies, the political groups are based on ‘age sets’, i.e. groups of people of the same age.¹ For instance, all the young men of a certain age form one group, the slightly older men another, and so on. Each group has its own particular work. Authority, while tending to be mainly concentrated in the hands of the elder age group, is also decentralised and diffused throughout the society via these age groups. A good example of such a society are the Karimojong of Uganda.² These are a non-settled pastoral people, without chiefs or kings, whose society nevertheless manifests some kind of political order and government through the functioning of the age groups.³

An even simpler system is that of the Bushmen, the wandering hunting people of the Kalahari desert of Southern Africa who were discussed in Unit 5. Though there are many thousands of Bushmen in all, they are divided into totally independent bands of, say, 20–60 people. A band is composed of a number of families linked to each other by kinship. There is a headman of the band – he too is related to the others by kinship bonds – but he is *not* an official or judge. Leadership, furthermore, rests on personal qualities and on public opinion not on official status. Each of these bands forms a little political system on its own.⁴

Non-kinship associations or clubs sometimes play an important part in societies without the state. An interesting example of this can be found among one group of American Indians (‘Red Indians’), the Cheyenne.⁵ Before their system was disrupted by more recent immigrants to America, it rested on the co-operation of religious leaders and a series of different associations. In some ways, the Cheyenne approximate a little more closely than, say, the Bushmen

1 It is conventional to distinguish between ‘age sets’, which refer to the *actual group of people* of a certain age, and ‘age grades’ which are the *stages* (e.g. childhood, youth, middle age, elderhood) through which each ‘age set’ moves. The main principle behind each is the same: the social significance of *age*.

2 For an account of the Karimojong political system see N. Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong politics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966; L. Mair, *Primitive government*, Penguin, 1962.

3 Those who have seen television programme 26 or read the extract by P. Bohannan in the *Reader* will wish to raise the point that the Tiv too have age sets (in addition to lineages) so why should they not be described as having an ‘age set system’? The usual account of the matter is that among the Tiv (and similar peoples) the lineages form the framework of the political system and age sets merely perform certain limited functions whereas in ‘age set systems’ the framework is provided by age sets. There are, however, real difficulties and controversies here and some would be doubtful about trying to make hard and fast distinctions between different types of ‘stateless systems’. They could argue for instance, that even in the Tiv ‘lineage system’, age sets play a more than merely incidental function.

4 The difficulty of exact classifications is again illustrated here for some authorities would hold that the Bushmen should be classified as a ‘band society’, being too small scale to compare with the other ‘stateless systems’ mentioned here. However it is clear that despite the small size of each band it does at least resemble other stateless systems in forming a political unit (for some purposes at least) but lacking the state.

5 For a lively account of the Cheyennes see E. A. Hoebel, *The Cheyennes, Indians of the Great Plains*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

or Karimojong, to a more formal type of governmental system in that they had set councils and 'chiefs'. This, however does not amount to a 'state' in the sense of possessing a centralised power or bureaucratic hierarchy, so their political system is normally classified as a 'stateless' one.

Other examples are more complicated in that they combine the various principles of lineages, age-groups, and associations, to make up a complex and sophisticated political system. One instance of this is the traditional political system of the Ibo (a people now well-known because of the part many of them played in the short-lived state of 'Biafra') and of the Yakö, both in Eastern Nigeria.¹

A list like this could be prolonged almost indefinitely.² It is better at this point just to make the general point that not only are these stateless societies now known to exist, but they also vary greatly among themselves. Some – like, say, the Tiv or the Bushmen – have no specialist political machinery and official personnel at all. Others, like the Cheyenne or the Ibo, have *some* specialised political institutions (like their councils), even though these are not consistent or formal enough to count as having a 'state'. Other writers have gone on, too, to point out that there are also many other half-way types – like, say, some of the mediaeval European kingdoms or the Mongol political systems in the Asian steppes – in which there are some elements of centralisation (the state) but these do not extend throughout all the domains claimed by the ruler: in one sense they also have elements or areas of 'statelessness'.

In the political system we have been discussing the outward forms have been varied. But all have two things in common: first the absence of a 'state' as we know it; and second, the fact that however strange they may look at first sight, they all turn out to be ultimately classifiable as 'political systems' when analysed in functional terms. As far as the *functions* of government go, government is after all possible without the state.

3 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY OF STATELESS SOCIETIES

What can we learn from this analysis of such exotic and unfamiliar societies? Do they throw light on the problems studied in political science?

There are various comments that can be made on this.

To start with, many sociologists (and here I am including social anthropologists) would insist that these societies are worth studying for their own sake in the sense that they provide us with further examples of the manifold possibilities of human life and society. In

1 See V. C. Uchendu, *The Igbo of South-east Nigeria*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965 (Igbo is an alternative spelling of Ibo); and D. Forde, 'The governmental roles of associations among the Yakö', in Cohen and Middleton *op. cit.*

2 For a general discussion of stateless societies see G. Lienhardt, *Social anthropology*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964, chap. 3 or J. Beattie, *Other cultures*, London, Cohen and West, 1964, chap. 9, or L. Mair, *Primitive government*, London, Penguin, 1962, chaps. 1–4. It will be noticed incidentally that most of these examples of 'stateless' societies are from Africa. This is no accident, as African political systems have survived the recent impact of foreign European invaders better than those in many other areas so that their systems can, unlike some elsewhere, be studied in the present and fairly recent past.

other words they remind us once again that man is flexible and that our own particular arrangements are not the only possible ones, or, necessarily, the 'natural' or best ones – a point that has been reiterated by both psychologists and sociologists in this course already.

More relevant to the study of government (the main subject of the last few weeks' work) are a number of different points. The growing knowledge now available of these stateless societies is in fact of surprising importance for political science generally. There are three main areas which they illuminate. The first can be passed over quickly, the other two demand treatment in more detail.

First, the discovery of societies in which there is no 'state' and thus no centralised coercive power sheds light on one of the old problems in political philosophy which was raised in the second week of the course: is centralised force (represented by the state) necessary for ordered political life? The answer given by Hobbes (and others) was yes. His assumption was that order was not 'natural' to men, but that force, centralised in the ruler (or in modern terms, the state), was necessary for the maintenance of peace and order.¹ But the discovery of societies in which this seems not to be so, certainly casts doubt on this kind of analysis.² It suggests that Aristotle's well-known dictum has more relevance: 'Man is a social (or political) animal' – i.e. that it seems that man naturally lives in society in a political context and does not necessarily have to rely on only one kind of institution (the state) to make political life possible.

Secondly, the discovery of the existence of politics and government in societies like the Tiv, has necessarily focussed attention not on the formal structure or constitution (of which none can be found among the Tiv) but on political *processes*. Politics – and the functions of government generally – have to be looked at as something dynamic over time and not just as a formal and static structure.

This concern with processes ties up with certain interests which have in any case been developing in the subject of political science generally. One very powerful movement within political science (often termed 'behaviouralism') has been insisting that it is not enough to study mere 'institutions' – one must look at the actual *behaviour* of individuals and groups involved in political processes. The general interest in voting behaviour, for instance, or the shaping of people's political alignments rather than a concentration on the formal machinery of government fits in well with the aims of this movement. At the same time the inter-disciplinary emphasis of this movement has widened the focus of political science. Co-operation with sociologists and social anthropologists has, among other things, led to a more comparative perspective in the subject.³ Examining

1 For an amplification of this, see Unit 2, esp. pp. 38 and 40 ff.

2 Though it could still of course be argued that if one redefines the concepts of e.g. 'state', 'force', 'order', 'society', the evidence on stateless societies is not absolutely conclusive. This point is taken up in the extract by Percy Cohen accompanying Unit 29 (*Reader*, pp. 559 ff.).

3 One influential work, for instance, was G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman (eds), *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960, which ranges widely over the world and draws on the work of sociologists (including social anthropologists) as well as political scientists. See also discussion based on similar work in the recent survey by W. J. M. Mackenzie, *Politics and Social Science*, London, Penguin, revised ed. 1969, Part IV, esp. chap. 13.

the findings of social anthropologists, for instance, has led to an awareness of the functioning of political systems *outside* the Western nations – in Africa for example – and consequently to a re-examination of the assumption that Western-type political institutions are the ‘natural’ ones for all societies. This more comparative approach also ties up with the interest in *theory* among political scientists (particularly those of the ‘behaviouralist’ school), in the sense of an attempt to produce a general analysis in conceptual terms to cover a wide range of empirical examples. Since it is hard to theorise effectively on the basis of a description of only *one* case, taking a wide number of cases (comparing, say, the Tiv with the British with the Americans with the Bushmen . . .) makes it more feasible to construct wide ranging theories. One example of this is the theory about the general functions of a political system, a theory which is touched on in this unit and elaborated further in the next one.

So studies of the *processes* of government as distinct from its formal structure, whether of the Tiv or elsewhere, are now realised to be of great importance in political science generally. Findings like those of the Bohannans among the Tiv are increasingly recognised as relevant for the comparative approach of much modern political science.

In this context it is worth saying a bit more about one particular process that the Bohannans noted among the Tiv.¹ This is the mechanism of fission and fusion. These two concepts also turn out to be illuminating for the study of parallel processes in industrial societies. It is easy to find situations in everyday life where these processes can be found. It is common, for instance, for there to be quarrels within the family, each individual and section working to pursue some particular interest (fission), while as opposed to outsiders they join together to present a united front (fusion). Or we can see the same kind of process in a football club; for instance there may be bitter internal factions and rivalries (fission), but in the face of a rival club they are quick to sink their differences (fusion). These are of course very obvious and well-known processes once they are pointed out. But it is not always remembered that they also apply in political life at a wider level too. We tend, for instance, to think of a political party as being a single once-and-for-all group. In practice of course there are continual internal quarrels resulting in the formation of sub-groups (with sub-sub-groups or factions within each of them) so that one party is far from being monolithic.² When the party does unite it is in face of the opposition – the competing party. Again, these competing parties in turn unite (to some extent at least) when it is a question of supporting their country against another – most of all of course in the event of war when a coalition government is often assumed to be the most natural and best type: there is fusion of opposing parties (a clear parallel here with the Tiv situation). Thus someone who regarded ‘the party’ or ‘the government’ or even ‘Great Britain’ as a single monolithic entity

1 It has also been noticed in many similar societies. The classic work on this was by Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, *op. cit.*).

2 This point is brought out clearly in the discussion of political parties in E. L. Levine and E. E. Cornwall, *An Introduction to American Government*, New York, Macmillan, 1968, pp. 61 ff., when they speak of a party as a force that ‘brings together a large segment of the society, which because of other natural factors tends to be split apart in countless directions’ (p. 61) and of the way in which it is a union of different pressure groups with highly divergent interests.

would be missing the very important point that, though there are occasions in which each of these fuses in face of opposition, there is also always potential or actual fission into smaller and yet smaller sub-units. To understand this it has proved fruitful to look not just at the formal structure of the supposedly enduring units (like, say 'party', 'government'), but at the actual processes involved.

The third point to emerge from the investigation of stateless political systems is the awareness that politics is possible even without the state. This has led political scientists and others to question the assumption that politics equals 'to do with the state'. After all, if 'politics' is possible without the state in stateless societies, might this not also be possible *within* state societies? It is possible therefore to argue that the field of politics in *all* societies (including state-type societies) also covers contexts other than those to do with the state, and that it is limiting the subject unrealistically if we concentrate wholly or mainly on the state.

The two other extracts accompanying this unit¹ illustrate how one can look for politics and government without any mention of 'the state' even in industrial societies. In the shopping centre the settlement of disputes and maintenance of social order – one of the functions of a political system – is in part arranged locally. 'Problems are handled in a face-to-face manner when they are still small' (MacCallum, *Reader*, p. 479), and the whole maintenance of order can be seen as comparable to that in a small stateless community. We can look at a queue in the same way. In Mann's description the queue is seen as a social system in its own right, one which has its own set of informal rules and sanctions to regulate behaviour; which has, in other words, its own political system. In the queue – as in the shopping centre – the official organs of the state play little part in the regulation of order, nor is there any centralised authority or body of formal officials within each of these which could be regarded as the equivalent of a state. The details of the queue and the shopping centre do not matter so much.² The real reason why these extracts have been included and the basic point of the argument here is that in industrial contexts too we can find the equivalent of the stateless political system of the Tiv and others: miniature social systems within the wider society which can be seen as political systems in their own right.³

A number of other parallels could be mentioned. It is possible to regard groups and associations like, say, a church, a group of factory workers or a neighbourhood as a kind of political system with its own politics and government. This is a topic which will be explored in Unit 28 (*Politics in Groups*), but the point to notice in the context of

1 S. MacCallum, 'Dispute settlement in an American shopping centre' (*Reader*, pp. 477 ff.); L. Mann, 'Queue culture: the waiting line as a social system' (*Reader*, pp. 481 ff.).

2 In particular readers will notice that the 'functions of a social system' mentioned in Mann's article are different from the 'functions of a political system' discussed in the main text of this unit. Some may be interested in comparing and contrasting the two. However in the present context the main point is as indicated in the text above, the parallelism of these different stateless systems, rather than the detailed differences in approach by different writers, interesting though these may be in other contexts.

3 This of course raises questions about what exactly are the criteria of 'political' here. This is a point taken up in Unit 27 (ii).

the present unit is the way the concept of 'politics' has been extended from the affairs of the *state* to political processes within groups independent of the state – both smaller stateless groups (like the shopping centre or the queue) *within* state political systems, and political systems which (like the Tiv) are totally stateless.

Political scientists are increasingly turning to such aspects. They have looked at politics and government in non-governmental organisations (such as a factory or a professional association), and at the politics of at first sight non-political sectors of the economy. The corollary of this is that to understand the government and political system as a whole in any society (even a state society) it is necessary to take into account not just the state and the government in the narrow sense but also all the political activity in the country at large. This is an approach which leads on to the subject of the general 'political culture' of a society, a topic discussed in the next unit.

4 CONCLUSION

It turns out that the study of these at first sight very remote and different societies like the Tiv, the Ibo or the Cheyenne have implications much nearer home. They affect our whole concept of 'politics' and have helped to make both political scientists and sociologists realise not only that politics and government are possible without the state, but that even in societies with the state (like contemporary Britain for instance), politics can be looked at in other contexts besides those directly affecting the state. Just as in Tiv country people's religious and ethical beliefs, their views of individual motivation, and the fission and fusion of groups, are all part of their politics, so too in Britain and elsewhere the whole cultural outlook and the interaction of many different kinds of groups, all make up the whole political system – it is not just the actions of Parliament or political parties. Similarly, now that it is clear that we can speak of political activity and function in, say, a Bushman group of fifty or so people, we can also see that it is possible to look at political activity within similar kinds of groups in our own society (in, for instance, a local club, a group of managers, or a committee) without necessarily having to refer to politics in the traditional sense of activity to do with the state. The whole concept of the nature of politics and of the scope of political science has thus been enlarged through the study of stateless societies.

This insight leads us on to the two following topics: Unit 27 about political culture and the political system as something comprising more than just 'the affairs of the state'; and Unit 28 about politics in groups (i.e. groups other than those directly related to the state).

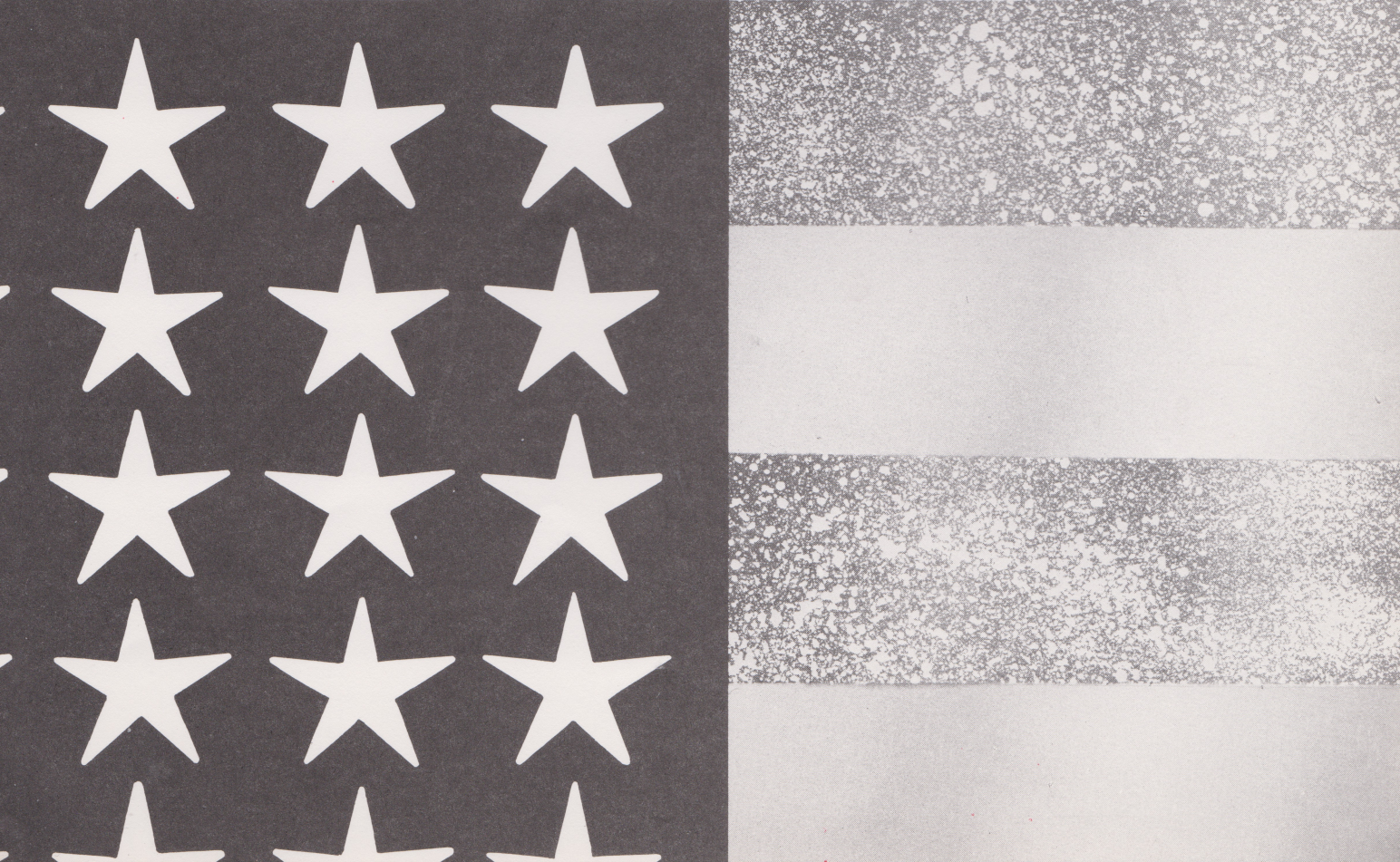
In sum, the basic conclusion of this week is: politics and government in the wide sense are possible without 'the state' both in stateless societies and within states themselves.

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Unit 27 i

Political Culture



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POLITICAL CULTURE

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last few weeks you have been introduced to many aspects of government and political behaviour. At one point you have looked at the division of powers in the American Constitution while at another you have puzzled over fission and fusion among Tiv lineages. Your view has necessarily been a superficial one, but in covering such a diverse field you have encountered two major problems that face all scholars of politics. First, how do we explain the great diversity of political institutions and political behaviour, and second how, among all this diversity, can we organise our knowledge so that we are able to identify uniform characteristics and patterns of behaviour? The diversity is certainly very striking. How, for example, do we explain not only the different institutions and processes, but men's different attitudes towards their governments? Why is it that among individuals and among whole societies there is such a variety of views about what 'ought to be', of what is acceptable and unacceptable in their government? Why in one state is military rule accepted with equanimity while in another it is viewed with hostility and distrust? Why among neighbouring families will some have a high respect for the police as symbols of government authority while others will view the police with suspicion and hostility?

One attempt to answer such questions is in the study of 'political culture'. This is the study of knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes towards government and politics. The political culture is the mental and intellectual environment in which politics is shaped, interpreted and judged. According to Almond and Powell (1966) an individual's political culture has three dimensions – first knowledge, second attitudes (that is the degree of attachment or alienation the individual feels towards the political system), and third values.

You have already met and examined 'knowledge, attitudes and values' in the units which were concerned with socialisation (Units 6–9), and these units are directly relevant to the study of political culture. They provide a framework into which you can set this unit. Here our particular interest is in seeing how knowledge, attitudes and values shape *political* behaviour. In this sense we are narrowing the view, but, as you will see in the next section which looks at changes in society, to understand political attitudes we have to relate them to broad social attitudes.

2 SOCIAL CHANGE – THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE PACE OF CHANGE

Scholars' interest in political culture has grown rapidly over the last two decades. In part this can be explained by the expanding horizons of political science, but it is also explained by practical problems which have faced individuals, groups and governments. For instance, the communications explosion of television and radio has made us all more conscious of events in other parts of the world. We have access to a vast variety of knowledge about politics and

governments in other states and so naturally face the problem of explaining and understanding this.

The communications explosion is part of a technological revolution which has dramatically increased the pace of change in society. As individuals and as whole societies, we have the problem of living in a period when attitudes and values of the past are under continual challenge. Let us take as an example of this comments made by Richard Hoggart in a television interview. Hoggart's comments can be tied directly with the *Reader* extract from Tawney in which Tawney was explaining the rise of the puritan ethic, itself an intellectual revolution in its own time. The extract from the *Listener* reads:

INTERVIEWER: Recently you've issued a sort of warning in your contribution to a book called *Higher Education: Demand and Response*. You say that we in Britain may be witnessing 'one of the most important secular changes in attitudes of the last two or three hundred years. We could be seeing the beginning of the end of the Protestant ethic.'

HOGGART: Let me try to define as quickly as I can what I mean by the Protestant ethic there. I mean that, first of all, any society tries to give people a framework for thinking which will further the purposes of that society. Our societies are commercial, highly industrial, productive, work-orientated, power- and authority-dominated. They have to be. To have a society as technically complicated and productive as ours you have to have time-keeping, you have to have a fairly stable structure of family and marriage. This is what Marx called ideology, a philosophy which is given you by the society so that you do society's jobs. The Protestant ethic in this is that combination of attitudes which is partly religious but is also very much geared to industry and commerce. On the whole you try to get on, and you get on alone; you conceive of life as a ladder, which you climb, leaving people at each step; and you know, in the Biblical sense, one woman – and that in marriage; you work and are thrifty and you save, through a building society or by a mortgage on a house and so on. All this fits you to become extremely effective in this type of society's terms. And it all comes together and is called the Protestant ethic, and it links up with aspects of Protestantism as a form of religion. The essence of Protestantism, someone once said, was the idea of individual conscience almost with a private line to God. What I meant was that some of the elements, especially in the student protest movement, go against all this. Some of the most intelligent students reject the notion of making themselves solitary cliff-climbers to get into the higher positions in society because they are rejecting that way of conceiving human society. (*Listener*, 1970, p. 481.)

Other contemporary problems are related to the emergence of new states from the old European colonial empires. Two among the many problems which these states have met, are first, what structure of government they should use and how this structure will respond to their particular circumstances, and second, how the ambitions of the government leaders for rapid economic growth can be reconciled with traditional attitudes within the society. The article in the *Reader* by Myron Weiner (pp. 392–404) gives a very clear account of the problems associated with the introduction of a new structure of government in India. As Weiner's study shows, an appreciation of political culture helps us to understand the situation in India and, by inference, in other underdeveloped countries. It suggests answers to such questions as: Why has parliamentary government faced such difficulties in countries like Pakistan and Nigeria, and why have one-party states emerged within political structures which elsewhere have supported competitive parties?

We have already noted the problems created by the rapid technological and industrial development of recent times. Even in a

technologically advanced society like our own, where we have lived with industrialisation and technical innovation for generations, the pace of technological change often outstrips the response in terms of knowledge, attitudes and values. Individuals and whole groups have felt insecure, alienated and isolated. There have been widespread complaints both about control by remote, faceless bureaucrats, and about the collapse of old standards and values. Even for those who feel reasonably well-integrated in this age of technology, there is the persistent challenge of adapting or reconciling established attitudes and values to the new social order.

In the 'underdeveloped world', the problems presented by technological development are even greater. These economically poor, predominantly agricultural states, are usually led by 'westernised' elites who are anxious that their states should share in and benefit from the technological revolution. These very ambitions for development may set the elite apart from the rest of the society, but even when there is general agreement on the benefits of technological change, there may be great personal and communal dilemmas and conflicts involved in achieving the goals. Traditional values and attitudes may run directly counter to the demands of development, so that individuals and whole societies find themselves torn between conflicting viewpoints. Traditional values may emphasise spiritual and not material rewards. They may demand conformity with and often be intolerant to deviation from traditional patterns of thought and action. They may encourage non-productive investment in such things as jewels and precious stones, or non-productive saving like burying money in the ground or hiding it under the bed. They may emphasise a high leisure preference. They may present immediate practical problems, such as a land holding system which is unsuitable for agricultural development, or an attitude to cattle which gives the animals a social rather than a cash value. One example of such a clash of values came out in a study I made of the pastoral tribesmen of north-east Uganda. These pastoralists live in a harsh environment in which rain comes uncertainly and infrequently and in which crop-growing is often impossible. I wrote (Barber, 1968, pp. 70-1):

Within this harsh environment the tribes centre their lives around livestock. The herds are the major form of wealth, the centre of interest and social activity, the bond of loyalty and identity as a group, but they are also the centre of friction and bitter, bloody rivalries between the tribes. The districts support a variety of livestock; cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, and camels; which constitute the one real security which the tribes recognise. Livestock are the dowry for marriage, they provide the basic foods of meat, milk and blood, their hides provide clothing and footwear. For these reasons, and for the status it gives him in society, the aim of each man is to have as large a herd as possible. Quality of stock is also important but not more important than possession in mere numbers. This attitude has been the despair of western-orientated government officials, who have attempted to introduce concepts of a cash economy, ranching and balanced stock to grazing ratios. . . . The predominance of livestock, and especially cattle, means that they are valued in a way which cannot be measured in money terms. Of the Karamojong Dyson Hudson writes: 'Cattle are necessary not only for subsistence, as Karamojong see it, but also for a full social life. Without an ox to kill at initiation, passage to manhood is impossible. Marriage is not possible without cattle for bridewealth, so families can neither be founded nor supported by the cattleless. Without cattle a man has no claim for attention in public affairs, for public affairs are 'the affairs of herdowners'.¹

1 N. Dyson Hudson, 'Factors Inhibiting Changes in an African Pastoral Society', *Transactions New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, Vol. 24, pp. 771-801, 1962.

3 GOVERNMENTS SHAPING BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Another outcome of technological development has been an expansion of government activities, and within this expansion there have been increased efforts by governments to shape men's beliefs and attitudes. Conscious efforts to shape values and attitudes are no new phenomenon, but the means now available to governments through the communications media, through mass education and through information services, are certainly greater than ever before.

In Unit 8 changing values and attitudes were discussed in terms of overcoming prejudice (p. 76) and the normative response that this probably aroused in you was: 'What a good thing.' Yet, when we think of governments consciously trying to shape attitudes and beliefs, the image that leaps up is of 'Big Brother', George Orwell's creation in his novel *1984*. In Western societies, the temptation is to associate this image very largely with Communist states. (How do you react to *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao*?) Certainly many Western scholars who study Communist states are struck by the overt attempts of the governments to induce uniform beliefs and attitudes. Frederick Barghoorn (1966, p. 86) writing about the USSR claimed:

Soviet policy in education and character formation is obviously based upon the assumption that the Communist Party can shape human consciousness to desired specifications through a centrally planned program of indoctrination and supervised group activity.

The Russian government's attempt to shape political culture may be more obvious and overt than in Western democracies, but it would be disingenuous to suppose that Western governments make no efforts to shape attitudes and values. For example, in America during the period of large scale immigration there was a conscious drive to build up loyalty to the new country through such ceremonies as saluting the flag at school. One obvious response to reading Barghoorn's statement about Russian education is to suggest that a Russian scholar examining the United States might well decide that the educational system there, or in this country for that matter, is based on the assumption that human consciousness can be shaped to accept capitalist values. You may remember reading in Unit 8, p. 65, that: 'The reality we see is . . . always subjective but since we learn to recognise "reality" in the society in which we live, we experience a considerable degree of consensual agreement and of knowing how to behave'. Naturally, we carry this sense of 'reality', and our particular set of values with us when we look at societies other than our own. You may be sure that whatever your reactions were to *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* most Chinese would have reacted differently.

How we react to any government's attempts to shape our values and attitudes will depend first upon our feeling of attachment to or alienation from the particular political system, and second upon the particular values and attitudes which are being shaped.

4 PAROCHIAL, SUBJECT AND PARTICIPANT CULTURES

Already we have referred to a range of political cultures from individuals to whole societies. In fact the study of political culture provides a useful bridge between micro and macro politics. The

individual can be related to society as a whole and vice versa. You can see this in Lipsitz's article in the *Reader*, in which, after examining the individual attitudes of factory workers, he concludes his article by relating these individual attitudes to general theories about democracy.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1965) have suggested four divisions of individual political attitudes – (i) attitudes towards what we have described as 'the formal structure of government'; (ii) attitudes towards the men who fill roles in government; (iii) attitudes towards particular government policies; and (iv) attitudes towards what part the individual thinks he can play in politics. Let us imagine two examples. Mr. Jones does not question the existing structure of government, and he supports, in general, the present government. However, he dislikes a new education policy which the government has just announced. He feels that he could do something about opposing the policy and plays an active part in a pressure group which tries to have the policy changed. Mr. White is a very different character, for he thinks that the existing structure of government should be changed substantially. He opposed the present government and is livid about the new education act, but unlike Mr. Jones, he feels frustrated by the system and thinks there is nothing he can do to oppose the government.

Turning to the characteristics which can be detected across the wide range from individuals to whole societies, Almond and Verba introduce a threefold cultural classification: (a) parochial; (b) subject; and (c) participant.

(a) Parochial Political Culture

In very rough terms this is one in which there is little knowledge of, and therefore few attitudes towards central government activities. Traditional attitudes and behaviour predominate such as lack of specialisation, and ascription rather than achievement as the criterion for advancement. Many underdeveloped societies face the problems of nation building and stimulating economic development while large sections of the population have parochial cultures.

(b) A Subject Political Culture

Is one in which there is knowledge of and attitudes towards government, but no expectation of playing any active role in politics. It is passive and submissive. Politics is viewed rather like the weather – it influences us but there is no real way of influencing it. Black people in the United States thirty or forty years ago are an example of subject political culture, and so is Mr. White in the example we gave above.

(c) A Participant Culture

Is one in which there is knowledge and attitudes towards government and an expectation that it is possible to play a part in political activities. Almond and Verba state that Britain and America have 'participant' cultures. In the example we gave, Mr. Jones would have an individual participant culture.

5 'LATENT' AND 'MANIFEST' INFLUENCES

The political culture of each individual is acquired by a socialisation process which is similar to other socialisation processes as described in Units 6–9. The socialisation process goes on throughout life, although some scholars would argue that with politics, as with all else, it is the early formative years of childhood that are the most important.

Political socialisation is partly unconscious. In this case the influences are *latent* rather than *manifest*. The attitudes and assumptions of those around us rub off on us so that we are a link in a system of cultural transmission. In addition, there are conscious or manifest influences in which we are subjected to overt attempts to influence us. The process, both latent and manifest, goes on in the family, the school, the pub, the church, the club, and when we are watching TV or listening to the radio. The range of influences is endless. We share these influences with others, but each of us in some ways has a unique pattern of political socialisation. One family may teach its children respect for the police, another to be suspicious and hostile. Success or failure in a chosen career, and the work a man does may influence his attitude towards the political system in general.

In the radio programme associated with this unit and the article by McQuail, O'Sullivan and Quine, 'Elite Education and Political Values',¹ you can look more closely at some aspects of socialisation through formal education. But even here it is worth emphasising the importance that is now attached to formal education in most societies. There has always been an educational process, both through the family and through larger social groups, and, as pointed out in Unit 9, this does not require a school system. For example, old people passing on tales and myths of the past are part of an educational and socialising process. This still continues, as does the strong influence of the family, but among the many dramatic social changes of the last generation has been a sharp increase in formal education – at schools, colleges and universities.

Even if unconsciously, an education system will have an influence on political culture. The content of the education will usually be centred around the particular country, with its literature, geography

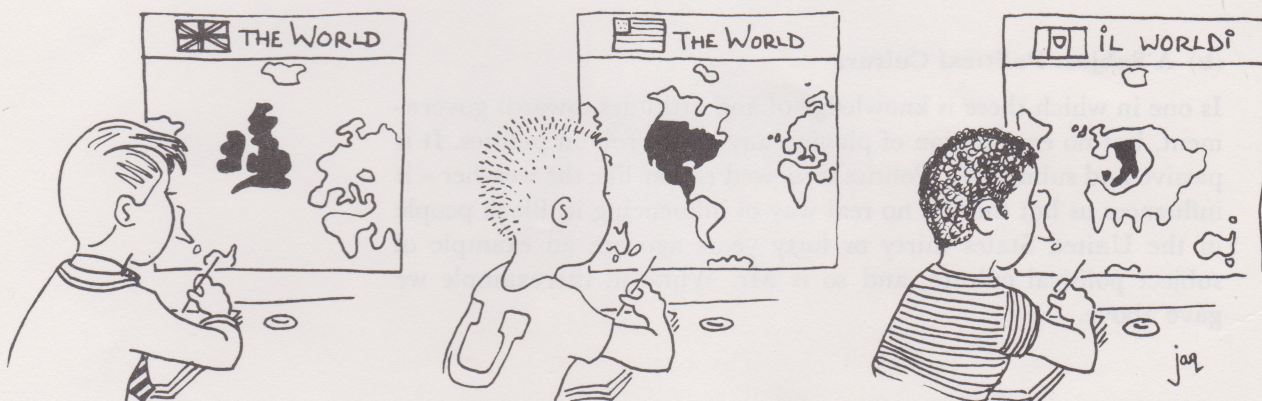


Figure 27 (i) 1

1 An offprint of the article by McQuail, O'Sullivan and Quine is sent with this unit.

and history given prominence. In some cases the educational influences are conscious rather than unconscious. Again, to use Russia as an example, Stalin has been in and out of the history books according to his standing at any particular time. Since Stalin's death and the denunciation of the personality cult, adulation has been directed away from the present leaders to Lenin, the mythical figure of the past. Barghoorn (1966, p. 94) writes:

His portrait hangs in the office of all soviet school directors, and young children, under the direction of trained adults, organise 'Lenin corners' in schools and Pioneer palaces.

The increase in educational opportunities has not always worked in the favour of governments. Even in countries where conscious attempts have been made to exercise tight control, students in high schools and universities have sometimes developed attitudes and values which have challenged those of the governing group. The process of education, with its opportunities for increased questioning has on occasion been the seed-bed for anti-government and sometimes revolutionary movements.

6 CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Let us build up a political caricature to help underline the range of political influences to which an individual may be subject, and the 'continuity' or 'discontinuity' of the influences. First, we could conjure up an example of marked continuity in which attitudes and values strongly reinforce each other. Imagine a girl born of a wealthy family which lives in an upper middle-class suburb and in which both the parents strongly support the Conservative Party. The daughter is sent to board at a public school. During her holidays she spends much of her time at the local riding stables and this introduces her to a young 'smart set'. When she leaves school she is sent to an expensive secretarial college, after which she is offered a job by a stockbroker friend of her father. She meets, captivates and marries the boss's son. They set up house in another upper middle-class suburb. They have three children, and a large dog. When the children are old enough to be sent to a 'good' school, she spends her new-found leisure playing bridge and golf and we could well close this fable by imagining her as an active member of the local Conservative Association.

Now let's imagine a slightly different set of circumstances which introduces discontinuity. What if the heroine while at secretarial college had met and fallen in love with a student who came from a working-class family with a background of active work in the Labour Party. Let us imagine that the student himself is President of the Labour Club at his university. Despite some parental doubts on both sides, the couple marry and set up house in a cosmopolitan central area of an industrial city. The husband continues as an active Labour Party worker and is soon returned as an M.P. Our final picture could then be of our heroine on the arm of the new member as he walks across the Yard at Westminster to take his seat in Parliament. Perhaps there is only one small doubt that plagues the new MP's mind. Did his wife vote for him or did she retain her original family loyalty?

Certainly, if the new MP had read David Butler's and Donald



Figure 27 (i) 2

Stokes' study of British voting behaviour (1969) he would have some justification for his doubts. In this study Butler and Stokes emphasised the importance of parental influence on political attitudes. They wrote (p. 46) that: 'There is, for example, evidence that the interest which politics holds for the adult elector is influenced by the degree of interest it held for his parents.' But it was voting behaviour in which they were particularly interested and which would have been of greatest concern to our young Labour MP. Here again, according to Butler and Stokes, parental influence is very important. They state (p. 47) that: 'A child is very likely indeed to share his parents' party preference. Partisanship over the individual's lifetime has some of the quality of a photographic reproduction that deteriorates with time: it is a fairly sharp copy of the parents' original at the beginning of political awareness, but over the years it becomes somewhat blurred, although remaining easily recognizable.' They demonstrated their findings in two tables, the first of which (the new photograph) gives a person's earliest voting preference as related to their parents' party allegiance, and the second (the older photograph) gave the person's present party preference. The Tables are reproduced below:¹

Table 1

Earliest Party Preference by Parents' Conservative or Labour Preference.

Respondents' Own First Preference	PARENTS' PARTISANSHIP		
	Both Parents Conservative	Parents Divided Con/Lab	Both Parents Labour
Conservative	89%	48%	6%
Labour	9	52	92
Liberal	2	—	2
	100%	100%	100%

1 Some American studies on party preferences have compared the parents' party preferences as *re-called* by their children (the samples included high-school students as well as adults) with the party preferences stated by parents in *independent interviews*. These studies showed that the children's re-call of parental opinions is probably somewhat distorted resulting in a higher parent-child agreement than really existed. From a psychological point of view this overestimation could be 'explained' in two ways – either by stating that the child identifies with a somewhat misperceived parental model or that 'post-decisional' cognitive dissonance reduction implies a distortion of parental political views.

Table 2

Present Party Preference by Parents' Conservative or Labour Preference.

<i>Respondents' Own Present Preference</i>	PARENTS' PARTISANSHIP		
	<i>Both Parents Conservative</i>	<i>Parents Divided</i>	<i>Both Parents Labour</i>
Conservative	75%	37%	10%
Labour	14	49	81
Liberal	8	10	6
Other	—	—	—
None	3	4	3
	100%	100%	100%

From Butler and Stokes' findings it would appear that in our hypothetical example, the daughter of a Conservative household who married a Labour MP would have faced a personal problem of *cognitive dissonance*. You were introduced to cognitive dissonance in Unit 8 (pp. 75-6), and you probably remember that the basis of the theory is that individuals strive towards consistency in their attitudes and beliefs. Where there is inconsistency, where, for example, new information or opinions from a trusted source conflict with earlier convictions, a revaluation has to take place. Three options are open. First the 'trusted source' may no longer be trusted, or not trusted on this particular issue, second the information may be ignored or distorted to suit earlier convictions, or third the earlier convictions may be abandoned.

Among the ways in which individuals appear to overcome cognitive dissonance problems in politics are either to misremember, or refuse to admit that they behaved in a way that they would no longer approve, or to claim that they had behaved in a way that they now approved. This frequently demonstrates itself in an eagerness to be associated with those who are politically successful. In the Gallup Poll taken *after* the Labour victory in the 1966 General Election it was discovered that 10 per cent more people claimed to have supported the new government than actually voted for it. Richard Hodder-Williams (1970) discovered a similar reaction when in 1967 he made a survey of the opinions of white Rhodesians. He made the survey in the farming area around Marandellas. Among other things, he discovered that 74.3 per cent of white voters in Marandellas claimed to have supported the Rhodesian Front at the 1962 election, whereas the actual vote for the party in that area had been 58.6 per cent.

7 CATEGORISATION OF FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE INDIVIDUAL SOCIALISATION

We can now identify and categorise four of the factors which influence individual political socialisation. These are: (a) the agents of socialisation; (b) the time span of the process; (c) the continuity or discontinuity of the socialisation; (d) the level of change.

The agents of socialisation include those we have mentioned already such as the family, school, occupation and the mass media. There are other obvious areas such as church and peer groups which we have not examined.

The time span of the process is closely related to the agents. It is usually accepted that the formative years – pre-school and schooldays – are the most important, but we should treat this assumption with some care. Lipsitz's article in the *Reader* suggests that the work a man does will influence his political attitudes and the influence grows the longer he stays in the job. This raises another important point in terms of time. The longer an individual is exposed to a particular agent of socialisation the more it is likely to influence him.

The continuity or discontinuity of socialisation can sometimes be related to latent and manifest influences. An individual who has a great deal of continuity in his socialisation may be unconscious that the process is happening at all. The cluster of attitudes (see Unit 8, p. 71) involved would probably be built around strong latent influences. For other individuals, however, there may be sharp breaks with manifest influences involved. As well as our hypothetical case of a girl from a Conservative home marrying a young Labour MP, another obvious example would be a boy from a poor, rural family in an underdeveloped country who succeeds in winning his way through schools to university. He will probably be exposed to considerable discontinuity and to a wide range of manifest influences. He also would probably have to deal with problems of cognitive dissonance.

The fourth category, which is the level of change, is built up from a combination of the previous three categories. The point here is that we all undergo change. When there is mutual reinforcement in the socialisation process in terms of agents, time and continuity of influences, the pattern of change is probably relatively smooth, easily absorbed and strongly internalised. However, if there is little reinforcement and considerable changes to be absorbed, then the changes will probably be more superficial. Although Kelman's paper 'Three Processes of Social Influence', which is in the *Reader*, pp. 154–60, is not concerned with political attitudes its three processes of 'compliance', 'identification', and 'internalisation' provide an interesting set of categories in which 'level of change' might be examined.

8 GROUP AND SUB-CULTURE

From the study of individual political culture, we can move to the study of group culture. Different cultural groups may emerge in the society for a variety of reasons – geographical, ethnic, religious, etc. If the group has quite distinctive cultural characteristics it can be identified as a sub-culture. In trying to identify sub-cultures we can use a variety of criteria. If we use America as an example, we might try to distinguish in terms of the family origin – Irish, German, etc.; or religion – Jew, Roman Catholic, Methodist; or geographical area – Texas, Mid-West, Eastern Seaboard. An individual will be caught up in several of these categories. For example, Mr. X may come from a family of German Jews and now live in the Mid-West. For Mr. X these groups may support each other in terms of cultural norms and characteristics. But in many countries there are sub-cultures which are alienated from the dominant political

culture of the society. This, as we have seen in Unit 24, is a common problem in many new states where sections of the population feel little identity with the state in which they live. The central governments have seen their tasks as the creation of a sense of national identity to overcome the separatist tendencies of the various groups. In such a situation, a government may feel that it cannot afford to be tolerant to separatist and divisive movements. This was the case in Nigeria where the Ibo attempt at secession was thwarted. It was also the case in Uganda where the Kingdom of Buganda formed a quite distinct entity based around loyalty to its 'Kabaka' or King. The ex-President of Uganda, President Obote, clashed with the Kabaka who fled the country. President Obote then announced that Buganda would not in future have an identity separate from the remainder of the country.¹

The existence of distinctive sub-cultures is not restricted to economically underdeveloped countries. There are such obvious examples in developed states as the French Canadians, black men in the USA, and the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland.

With the exception of Northern Ireland, there has been a high level of agreement on basic cultural standards in the United Kingdom. This does not, of course, imply agreement on day-to-day political decisions. Labour and Conservative supporters will clash on the particular policies which they think should be pursued, but unlike distinctive sub-cultures, they do not feel alienated from the society or the political system. Perhaps it is because of this high degree of consensus in our political system that we have been able to be relatively tolerant. If the consensus goes then the toleration could well go.

9 NATIONAL POLITICAL CULTURE

The general comment on British society leads to a consideration of cultural characteristics for whole countries. Is it possible to distinguish Russian political culture from German political culture and German from French, and so on? Certainly we do this in everyday life.



Figure 27 (i) 3

¹ President Obote was overthrown in an army 'coup' in 1971.

It is quite common to hear people in this country say that the Germans are very militaristic and the French cannot run a democracy – they always need a ‘strong man’ like De Gaulle. Scholars have also made generalisations about national characteristics. In the case of Almond and Verba (1965) these generalisations were made after extensive surveys in five countries. Among these five countries, they concluded that Italy was ‘An Alienated Political Culture’, with ‘relatively unrelieved political alienation and . . . social isolation and distrust’, low national pride, and little feeling of obligation to participate in community affairs (p. 308). In contrast they found that the United States was ‘A Participant Civic Culture’ in which individual participation was highly developed and widespread, a sense of obligation to contribute to community effort was high, and there was great pride in the political system (p. 313).

Richard Rose (1965) in his book *Politics in England* identified what he claims to be English culture characteristics. He says that:

- (a) A high value is given to liberty but not social equality;
- (b) There is a deferential attitude towards political leaders;
- (c) Political leaders are expected to have exceptional qualities, and not be too friendly in a back-slapping fashion; and
- (d) Religion and politics are not now supposed to mix.

As a final example of scholarly generalisation, Barghoorn (1966, p. 6) in his study of the USSR, claims that:

Much of Stalin’s apparent cynicism in assuming a role resembling that of Ivan the Terrible may be understood though not necessarily condoned, as an effort to evoke the deepest, most stirring historical memories of the Russian people. These memories favoured a stern, harsh, astute ruler – provided he would safeguard state security.

This comparison of Stalin and Ivan the Terrible may give the impression that national cultural characteristics are static and survive largely unchanged from generation to generation. This is plainly not so. For instance, if Almond and Verba had undertaken their survey of political culture in the United States in 1969 instead of 1959 would they have so confidently written of the ‘general social trust and confidence that permeate the political system’ (p. 314), and would they have concluded that there was a high degree of confidence in the system?

Some national characteristics will persist, but like other aspects of social development, political culture draws both from the past and the challenge of the present. In some societies at some periods the challenges to established attitudes have not been strong and so cultural characteristics have been handed down from generation to generation with only small modifications. Against this there have been periods of dramatic upheaval in which sharp cultural changes have occurred. But most societies are a mixture and usually it is possible to identify both old and new values and attitudes lying side by side. West Germany provides an interesting example of this. The defeat in two major wars was a traumatic experience for the German people and has produced some sharp cultural changes, but at the same time, some distinctive German characteristics have survived. Lewis J. Edinger noted this. According to him, although Germany had rapidly

restored her economic strength, most West Germans during the 1960s, when he was making his studies, had little desire to see their country reassert herself as a leading international power. He thought that this was the result of the Germans accepting responsibility for the catastrophic Second World War, whereas previously few Germans had accepted responsibility for the First World War (Edinger, 1968, p. 75). While these attitudes reveal a break with the past, there were other German attitudes which persisted. Edinger states (p. 95) that opinion polls indicate that the maintenance of political stability was, as in the past, still largely viewed as a function of state control rather than voluntary group compromise. Political bargaining was seen as nasty and sordid and sustained political controversy as unnecessary because the impartial state should regulate and arbitrate in disputes.

From this arises a series of interesting questions about how individuals within the society change their attitudes and behaviour. New ideas and values (put forward, for instance, by a new elite) presumably are initially seen as deviant and unacceptable. Do parents begin to influence children along new lines as different kinds of people are seen as 'successful'? Have the parents themselves been influenced by the mass media or by the leaders, or do they remain relatively unchanged? Can governments change attitudes and behaviour through legislation, control of mass media and school curricula? Can change happening slowly and haphazardly in response to changing social and economic conditions be accelerated? Some of these questions have been touched on in this unit and they will be discussed again in Unit 36 with particular reference to India, but of course there are no absolute answers.

10 CROSS NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

It may seem that in examining individuals, groups and nations a comprehensive cover of political culture has been achieved, but in fact, there are also cross national characteristics which can be detected. For example, there are attitudes based on differences in generations, like recent international students' movements, or particular religious beliefs – Puritanism is an example of this. In their five-country study – the USA, Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico – Almond and Verba (1965) distinguished two other important cross national characteristics. These were based on differences of education and sex.

In analysing educational differences, their survey confirmed the fairly obvious conclusion that in all five states: 'The uneducated man or the man with the limited education is a different political actor from the man who has achieved a higher level of education.' (Almond and Verba, 1965, p. 316.) The less educated tended to have 'subject' and 'parochial' sub-cultures, while the educated had 'participant' sub-cultures. Better education meant greater political knowledge, greater freedom in discussing politics with a wide range of people, and greater confidence in the capacity to influence the government.

In examining the importance of sex differences, Almond and Verba noted that men were generally more politically orientated than women, but that among women there were clear differences in the five countries studied. In general women played a more active

political role in the United States and Britain than in the other countries. The authors suggested that 'in the United States and Britain the family tends to be a part of the political system, that events and issues in the polity tend to be transmitted into the family via both marriage partners, and that political discussion tends to be frequent and reciprocal rather than male dominated.' (p. 334.)

Before the British males taking this course develop a conspiracy theory about the political role of women, the point which must be re-emphasised is that political culture for the individual, the group or the society, comes from a whole complex of influences—sex is only one of them.

Try for yourself to note down the factors which you think have played a part in shaping your political knowledge, attitudes and values, and see how much continuity and discontinuity there has been in the socialisation process.



'If he's the handsome one with blue eyes, the answer's "yes"'

Figure 27 (i) 4

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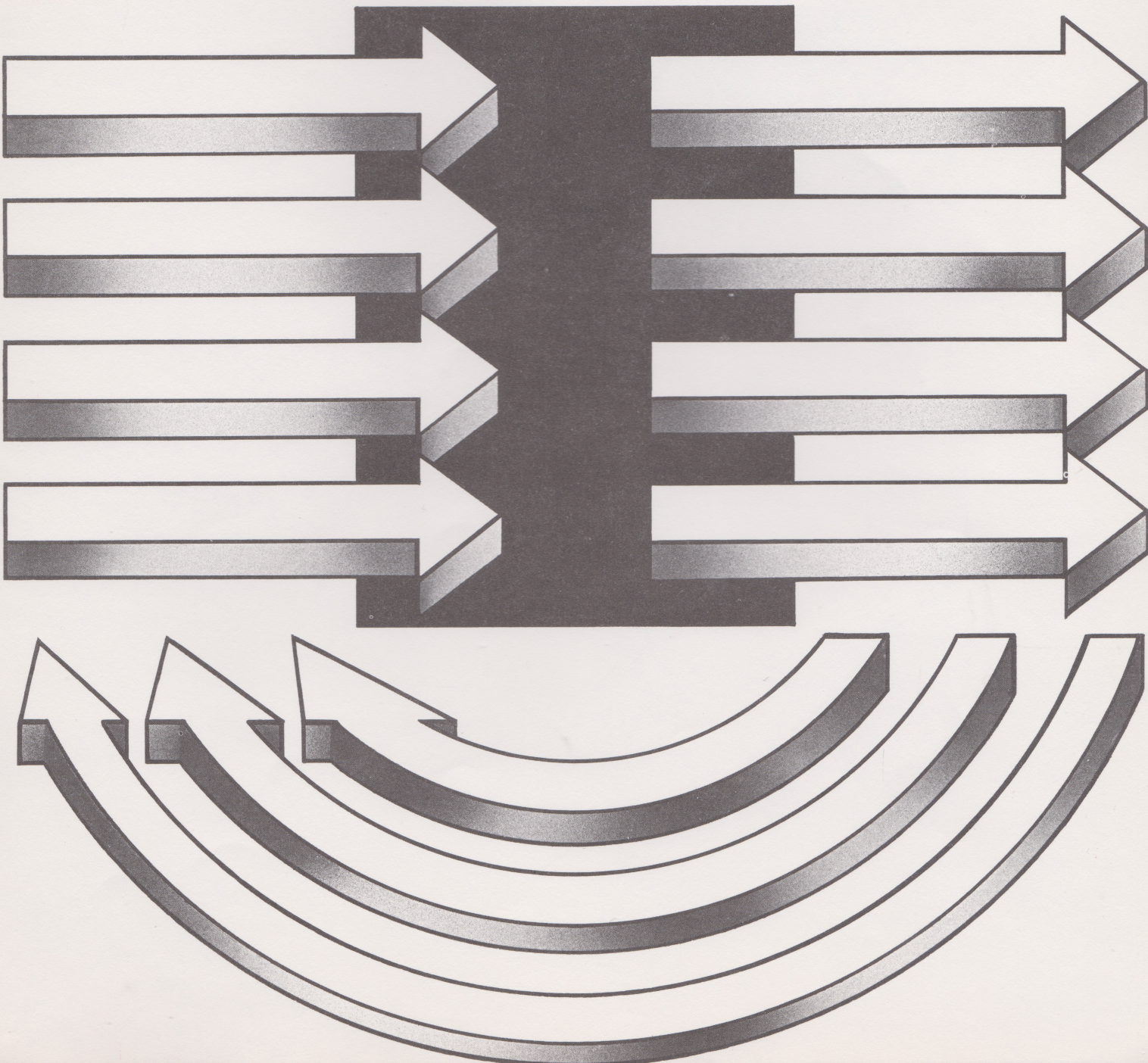
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Unit 27 ii

Politics and Political Systems



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POLITICS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

1 INTRODUCTION

So far we have identified and discussed various parts of government. We have distinguished the formal structure that exists in states, and have gone on to show how the formal structure is complemented by informal institutions – parties and interest groups. Yet, as Unit 26 showed, this analysis in terms of formal and informal structures of government applies only to states and there are societies in which there is government without the state, government taking place through the interaction of informal groups. Beyond these aspects of society relevant to the study of government, we have also indicated the significance of the general political culture – how ideas about the formal structure, or about what someone should obey and in what circumstances, provide an environment within which the formal and informal institutions are operating. In all, therefore, we have been identifying and describing discrete political parts of society.

At the same time as describing these parts, we have been following the way in which the study of government has been developing. We have seen that when government came to be studied empirically and in a systematic way in the nineteenth century it was as an outgrowth primarily from the study of law, and thus the main attention of empiricists was concentrated on the formal institutions described by the law. It was arising from a concern to understand why these formal institutions acted as they did that attention moved to political parties, interest groups and then to features that are now encompassed by the term political culture. Attention has shifted to a whole range of institutions and activities in society.

The discussion in this block of the political aspects of society brings me to the point of posing and trying to answer two basic questions. There is the question of how can the whole political aspect of society be described? That is, having identified and described different parts, from the formal structure through to the beliefs and values of people, how can all these parts be linked together so that the characteristics of all the political aspects of society, and of the interrelationships between them, are described as a working whole? Secondly, there is the question of how is this political dimension to be identified? If there can be government without the state, and if politics does not simply cover the structure and working of the formal organisation of governments, but involves looking at informal institutions, attitudes and ideas, what is to be regarded as political?

These are two closely connected questions to both of which political scientists provide answers, even if they are not agreed on a correct answer.

2 WHAT IS POLITICS?

2.1 Interpretations in Different Societies

I will take first the question about how to distinguish the political dimension of society, and start by pointing out that there are two

different approaches to this question. What is to be regarded as political activity and the limits to politics can be seen as matters to be investigated empirically since in some societies anyway most people have definite, if hazy, ideas about the answers to those questions. In contemporary Britain, a broad distinction is accepted between public matters and private ones, and politics is associated with *public* affairs. It is also an activity that is associated with particular institutions, notably parliament and political parties. In other societies there are, however, markedly different ideas. A linguist, for example, studying the concept of politics and its connotations in Tanganyika and Kenya in the 1950s pointed out that the Swahili word used to translate politics described activities directed against the government: 'politics is the disturbance of local and central government, by refusing to obey the law, pay poll-tax . . . politics means striking for higher wages.' (Whiteley, 1961, p. 14.) In northern Sierra Leone, as on the Swahili coast, the concept of politics was a novel one whose emergence was associated with the rise of nationalism and the termination of colonial rule, but there in contrast the Limba speaking people had taken the word 'politics' into their language, and to them its primary meaning was the business of getting rich quick through government at the expense of people like themselves.

2.2 The Approach of Political Scientists

These examples illustrate the point that in different societies there is a particular interpretation given to the concept of politics in ordinary usage. The peculiarities of local usage are interesting as features of the particular political culture, but they do not form the basis for the whole study of politics. A political scientist needs to approach the task of identifying politics and political activity in a different way. For him, politics describes an abstraction from social situations; he is isolating one part or one sort of activity in order to subject it to a more detailed investigation. If, moreover, he is going to be able to compare something in distinct social situations and societies, it is necessary to abstract in a way that allows for an identification of politics in these different settings. The issue for political scientists is to decide what is central to politics so that they can proceed to isolate and specify it.

2.3 Association with the Institution of the State

A nineteenth-century answer to this issue was to say 'the state': then and later this was the focus of attention in political science. The state was centrally important in politics, and it was the state and the formal institutions of government that were abstracted from society and subjected to detailed analysis. Thus Sir Frederick Pollock (1911) wrote, originally in 1882 in his *History of the Science of Politics* (p. 8):

. . . We come to consider man not only as a member of society, but as a member of some particular society, organized in a particular way, and exercising supreme authority over its members; in other words, we consider man as a citizen in his relations to the State. Thus the field is indicated for the science of politics. . . . The foundation and general constitution of the State, the forms and administration of government, and the principles and methods of legislation seem naturally to fall asunder as heads under which the topics of political science may be grouped, though a strictly accurate and exclusive division is hardly possible; and we must add as

another head, more clearly marked off from all these, the consideration of the State as a single and complete unit of a higher order, capable of definite relations to other like units.

What was central to Pollock's conception of politics was the state, and this is an approach to delimiting the political part of society which has commanded continuing support. Sixty years after Pollock, knowledge of politics continued to be expressed as being an understanding of 'the theory, organisation, government and practice of the state'. (Smith and Zurcher, 1944, p. 238.)



"That's nothing - you should see what they do if you pick the flowers."

Figure 27 (ii) 1 . . . 'the practice of the State' . . .

That the state should be regarded as the focus of politics, and that this should be sufficient of an abstraction for investigation and study is intelligible in the circumstances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the legal and political theory of the period it was meaningful to speak of the state as sovereign, and the concept of the state was a useful abstraction for the study of countries in Western Europe and North America. But all this was before Marx had begun to have an impact, and before attention broadened to other phenomena and new societies. It is particularly striking, in the circumstances of the 1970s, that in a *History of the Science of Politics* written in 1882 and revised in 1911 there should be not a single reference to Marx; while Pollock's attitude towards less developed societies is indicated by his observation that:

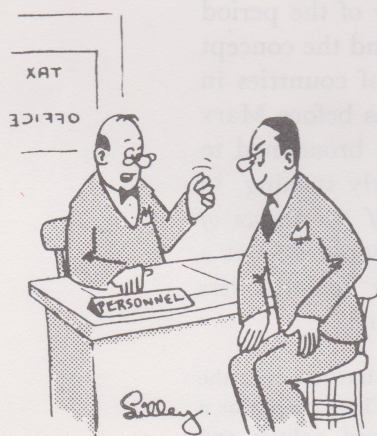
Aristotle . . . is the founder of the science [of politics]; but not even the greatest of men can make a science out of nothing. . . . There cannot be a theory of constitutions and statesmanship until civilized politics and statesmen exist in fact, any more than there can be a theory of ethics unless in a society which is already moral. (Pollock, 1911, p. 9.)

Marx, however, by making class conflict central to political explanation, and treating the state simply as an instrument by which one class oppresses another, presented a challenge to nineteenth-century conceptions of politics, and opened up fresh possibilities for political science. Equally, the search for an understanding of politics that carried empirical enquiries beyond the formal structure to informal institutions raised questions about what was central to politics. Similarly, widening the geographical area within which politics was studied directed attention to the question of whether in abstracting a political dimension the criterion for selection should be the

existence of a particular sort of institution such as the state, or alternatively a particular process or activity. As the scope of political enquiry broadened it proved necessary to delimit what was central to politics by moving to a higher level of abstraction. Instead of taking the state as the basis for defining politics, it was considered necessary to go beyond this institution, ask why the state was chosen, and take the process of ruling or the exercise of authority as the means of determining what is central to politics.

2.4 Power, Rule or Authority

While it is now common for political scientists to delimit politics by describing it as a particular process, rather than in terms of the institution of the state, there continues to be considerable difficulty in defining politics – distinguishing what it is in society that is to be regarded as political. In the relatively recent book *Modern Political Analysis* from which one extract has previously been taken for study, R. A. Dahl (1963, pp. 5–6) compares three famous writers on politics: the Greek philosopher, Aristotle; Max Weber (1864–1920), one of the most important influences in modern social science; and a more recent writer, Harold D. Lasswell. Dahl points out that all three writers emphasise authority or rule as the focus of politics but disagree on whether other limiting characteristics apply. Aristotle maintained that politics referred to only a particular form of authority – that connected with the polity – and not, for instance, the authority of the master over the slave. Weber, Dahl suggests, stressed that the authority or rule was exercised within a given territorial area. Only Lasswell took the inclusive position that any act that was connected with the shaping and sharing of power was political. On the basis of this comparison, Dahl takes a stand on the



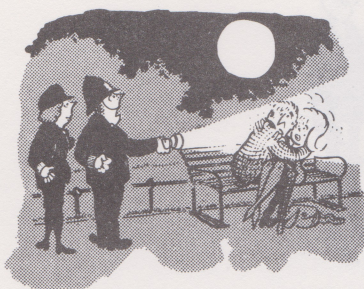
"A tax-man's life is hard, the pay's poor, the hours are long but, oh, that delicious feeling of power!"

Figure 27 (ii) 2

broad interpretation and offers a definition of politics as being concerned with power, rule or authority.

Contrast Dahl's conclusion with that in another widely used introductory book, *Comparative Politics: a Developmental Approach* by G. A. Almond and G. B. Powell (1966). Here also the authors compare Weber's statement with that of others, but their conclusion differs from Dahl's. They conclude (pp. 16–17) 'all these definitions imply legitimate, heavy sanctions; the rightful power to

punish, to enforce, to compel . . . legitimate force is the thread that runs through the action of the political system, giving it its special quality and importance. . . . For them the controllers of legitimate force are the focal point of politics and all activity that is directed to trying to secure the exercise of this legitimate force can be described as political activity.



"All right you two, move along!"

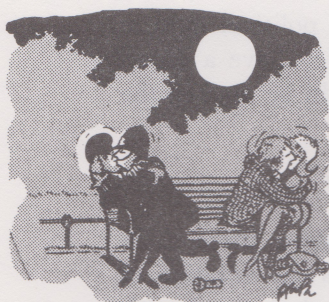


Figure 27 (ii) 3 'The exercise of legitimate force,'

Dahl, in other words, takes a wider view than Almond and Powell. For Dahl politics is concerned with the exercise of power, rule and authority. The exercise of such power is not confined to the state, it can take place in other associations – trade unions, schools, even the family. Almond and Powell narrow their conception to one sort of power, rule or authority – legitimate force. And since in state societies this is a particular prerogative of the government, they are also directing attention to politics at the level of the whole society. Some of the complications and possibilities of Dahl's interpretation will be considered later, but here we will pursue Almond and Powell's more traditional outlook, recognising that this is only one interpretation of what is to be regarded as the scope of political activity.

Both Dahl and Almond and Powell provide highly abstract descriptions of politics. Their statements are more abstract than the concept of the state and are thus expressed in terms one move more remote from the actual business of government and politics that goes on around us. But such abstract statements are necessary if what is treated by political scientists as the heart of politics is such that politics can be studied in societies as different as the United States and the Tiv. The description by Almond and Powell in particular clearly encompasses the institution of the state but it could also allow for the study of politics in radically different sorts of societies.

To follow Almond and Powell's interpretation, what justifies a discussion of the formal structure of government, political parties and interest groups, as well as lineages, age sets and associations in stateless societies, is that they are all directly concerned with how legitimate force should be used. And there are features of the general



Figure 27 (ii) 4

culture in societies that can be described as the political culture because there are specific ideas and attitudes which have a direct relevance to the issue of how legitimate force should be used in the particular society.

2.5 Conclusion

To sum up then: this section has so far been making three main points. First, a characteristic feature of enquiry is the isolation of something in order to subject it to a deeper analysis, and with political scientists this has involved abstracting the political dimension of social activity. Secondly, in the past it has been common to delimit this political dimension with reference to the state, but in more recent years it has proved necessary to delimit political activity at a more abstract level in order to accommodate the knowledge that has been built up and the wider range of societies that have been brought into view. Thirdly, while there is no unanimity on how to describe what is central to politics, the tendency is to start not from an institution but instead from a process and to make the exercise of power, rule or authority the focus of political science. This process is delineated in different ways by different scholars but however this is done, it is the significance of something for the exercise of power, rule or authority that leads to it being described as political.

3 POLITICAL SYSTEMS

3.1 Introduction

We are not simply concerned to determine what particular aspects of society have a direct relevance for its politics and government. It is important to be able to identify aspects that are important in politics, but equally an understanding of politics and government in society depends on seeing how the different parts act together to affect the way legitimate force is exercised. The purpose of this final section is to consider the advantages of looking at how all these parts fit together in a functioning political system.

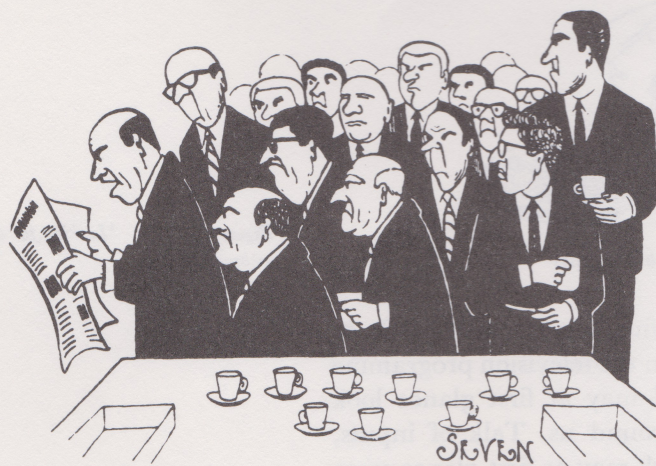
Politics is a dynamic process. A range of institutions are involved in it and in this block these have broadly been distinguished as the formal structure and informal political institutions. The political

institutions are, furthermore, operating in the context of a political culture. All these parts act to achieve particular objectives, and in so doing interact with other parts and establish relations with them. In order to understand politics and government, therefore, it is important not simply to know about the distinct parts, but to understand the relationships between these parts and to appreciate what are the regular patterns of relations built up through the interaction of the parts.

The way in which all the different political parts fit together is peculiar to each individual society. There is much that can be learned in general terms about constitutions, legislatures, parties and interest groups, but for all the uniformities and points of similarity in these institutions across societies there are also unique features in each individual situation. For all the attempts at developing in Britain a Westminster export trade, and the building of model parliaments across the world from Freetown, Sierra Leone, to New Delhi and Kuala Lumpur, each has particular local peculiarities, and this is even more true of local political parties and interest groups. Political scientists have developed a fund of knowledge that helps in the understanding of the political dimension in societies, they clarify the nature of political phenomena, they provide generalisations about regularities – and one such generalisation is that to understand in depth the politics of any single society, whether it is as large as the United States or as small as Malta, means studying that particular society. The local political culture, the character and range of political institutions and the particular pattern of relations developed between them is unique to each society.

3.2 The Notion of a System

Guidance, however, does also exist on the way all these parts fit together in a particular society. Beyond providing an understanding in general terms of distinct parts and of the characteristic relations between particular parts, models of the general processes operating



'Just look at this, chaps - another STUPID article about the Civil Service being overstaffed and underworked!'

Figure 27 (ii) 5 ... 'characteristic relations' ...

in politics and the relationship between them have been developed at an abstract level. The complex processes operating in daily life are subsumed under general and abstract categories so that, for example, the action of villagers in holding a public meeting to demand a fresh water supply, or French farmers dumping a load of

rotten tomatoes on a road to demonstrate their disgust at prevailing prices, or the Association of University Teachers issuing a statement to the press explaining their case for a pay rise are all covered under a general category of interest articulation. All political activity can be expressed in such general categories and the relationship between them set out, and it is common to express the result as a model of the political system in societies.

The idea that political activity in a society can be viewed as a political system directs attention to the whole political dimension. The political system describes the sum of the parts plus the general pattern of relationships that exist. The concept of a system has been introduced before in this course, starting with Unit 4, and it will be recalled that any system comprises the parts or elements, the relationships between them and the process of interaction on which that relationship rests. The political system refers, under Almond and Powell's conception of politics presented above, to the particular system that focusses on the exercise of legitimate force.

Any description of a political system is necessarily highly abstract. It is an essential feature that it is so abstract as to provide a guide to understanding not just one society, or even a few societies, but political activity in all societies. One attempt at describing the political system in society is that provided by D. Easton in his article 'An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems' (the *Reader*, pp. 491-500). In this article Easton sets out a description at a high level of abstraction of the way in which politics works, and



'Is this the way to the brain drain?'

Figure 27 (ii) 6 'Looking for a way to embrace Easton'

it can be compared with the structural functional model of G. A. Almond's which will be explained briefly in the television programme associated with this unit. Neither model may at first glance look like the sort of politics that goes on around us. Talk of inputs, outputs, conversion processes and feedback may at first glance seem somewhat unhelpful for understanding British politics and the place in them of the activities of the British National Farmers Union during the annual review of farm prices, or of the significance in Rhodesian politics of the action of the Minister of Law and Order in sending another African off for preventive detention. Both models, however, are attempts at abstracting from this sort of continuing activity the basic political processes that are going on in societies whether they are Britain, India, or Rhodesia, and at the same time

representing schematically the way these processes are woven together.

3.3 Uses of the Notion – To Explore Implicit Assumptions

The idea of regarding political institutions or activities as part of a political system helps towards placing them in their wider context, and the different models of a political system that exist facilitate an understanding of how disparate parts fit together and affect each other in a particular society. To begin with, the general idea and the particular models encourage a self-conscious exploration of the question of how certain parts relate to the whole working political order in a specific society. As Easton has put it:

We can examine the operation of such institutions as political parties, interest groups, government, and voting; we can study the nature and consequences of such political practices as manipulation, propaganda and violence; we can seek to reveal the structure within which these practices occur. By combining the results we can obtain a rough picture of what happens in any self-contained political unit.

In combining these results, however, there is already implicit the notion that each part of the larger canvas does not stand alone but is related to each other part; or, to put it more positively, that the operation of no one part can be fully understood without reference to the way the whole itself operates . . . it is valuable to adopt this implicit assumption as an articulate premise for research and to view political life as a system of interrelated activities. (The Reader, pp. 491–2.)

By considering explicitly the pattern of relationships in society in terms of a model, preconceived and assumed ideas about the relationship of some part to the whole are put to the test. For instance, as a simple example, the use of some abstract model of the political system can help people to avoid the assumption that the role of parties in politics is necessarily the same in other societies as it is in Britain, and instead to direct attention to the question of what indeed is the relationship of the parties to the wider political order. The notion of a political system, and particular models developed of the nature of it, help therefore to guide thought towards a realistic consideration of how all the politically active parts in a society fit together into a larger political whole.

3.4 To Help Organise Understanding

Neither the notion of a political system, nor the different models that exist of such systems, provide – this point needs repeating – the answers to how any one specific institution in a named society fits into the political system of that society; nor do they reveal the particular characteristics of the actual systems that operate in specific societies like the USA. These are topics that have to be investigated empirically. The models provide some help about the relevant questions to ask, but detailed enquiry is then required before there can be an understanding of the political system. It is after all of little help simply to say that in the Soviet Union there are inputs into the system and a conversion process . . . , or to say that there is interest articulation, interest aggregation, rule making and so on; if the aim is to understand the political system in the Soviet Union it is necessary to know how interest articulation takes place, and what functions the Communist Party performs, and what are the Party's relationships with the Supreme Soviet. No idea of a political system nor any specific model provides the answers, what

they do is to guide investigation. Where, moreover, all the parts of a political system have been identified from the formal structure, the informal political institutions, to the political culture, they help to organise the evidence, provide a guide to what stable relationships may exist and indicate how parts might fit together.

3.5 To Explore Change and Its Significance

The basic idea of a political system also has a further usefulness, for besides guiding the exploration of how parts might fit together, it also directs attention to the question of how a change in one part of the system affects other parts. Because different parts are viewed as elements within a working system, it is assumed that anything that alters an institution or a stable relationship has ramifying effects, and one result of regarding the political order in society as a political system is to concentrate attention on the effects of changes. Widespread interest in the notion of a political system has therefore resulted in particular sorts of questions being asked and in enquiries being made along certain lines. One example of this among many is provided by a study I made (Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, 1970) of the political system in Southern Rhodesia. I suggested on the basis of enquiries that a certain peculiarly Rhodesian political system had developed in the thirty years after 1923 and that in this period changes had been accommodated by the system, but the emergence of the Rhodesia Front as a mass political party in the 1950s and its victory in the 1962 general election had effects that amounted to a radical overturning of the whole political system. This study was only a single somewhat limited example, but it illustrates the point that by regarding the political order in society as a political system certain general questions are suggested which some people, anyway, see as important.

3.6 Its Value in Comparative Studies

Finally, the notion of a political system and the models developed have done more than help to organise knowledge about many isolated aspects so that they can be seen as parts of a larger whole, they have also helped to advance the comparative study of politics. The state as a model of politics was central to much of the study of politics and government in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but it was useful only for the study of a limited number of societies where there was much in common. By developing new conceptions and models of politics at a more abstract level it has become possible to draw radically different societies into the comparison. This has been given point in this block by the way the stateless society of the Tiv has been introduced and its political system explained in terms that allow for comparisons to be made with such strikingly different societies as those in Britain and America. Problems arise from having models expressed at the level of abstraction of those of Easton's and Almond's, but it is this level of abstraction that allows for the range of comparison to be extended.

3.7 Alternative Approaches

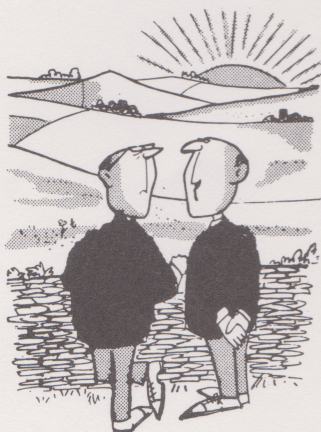
Having placed this emphasis on the idea of a political system, it is important to point out that there are other rival or complementary theoretical approaches used in the analysis of politics and govern-

ment. Much attention has been given in recent years to approaches based on the idea of a political system but certain alternatives have also been popular. This has applied for example to group theory – something that has already been discussed in the radio programme with Unit 25. As will be recalled, Truman and others before him took the group as the basic unit of analysis because for them society is made up of the interaction of a large number of groups, and it is through the study of groups, therefore, that politics in general can be understood. But group theory is only one example among many, and indeed political science is currently marked by a great diversity of approaches and interests in politics and government.¹

The notion of a political system is influential in the study of politics and government. It provides one approach to the problem of making sense of a number of disparate elements – formal institutions, informal institutions, political ideas, and political relationships. It is not the only way – group theory is one alternative – and there are a number of different systemic models, but it is a useful tool for helping to understand politics.

4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this course narrative has been dealing with two points. First it has taken up the issue of what is to be regarded as the political dimension in society and here it has been pointed out that politics has come to be delimited at an abstract level in the light of the problem of understanding politics and government in remarkably diverse societies, and while there is no general agreement on how to express what is central to politics the concentration is on the exercise of power, rule or authority. In the second part the course narrative has concentrated on explaining how the notion of a political system has helped to integrate the separate knowledge about a wide range of political institutions and political relationships. Here the major points that have been made are first, no notion of a system or particular model explains an actual situation,



"I still think a mini-skirt
getting out of a mini-car is far
more breathtaking."

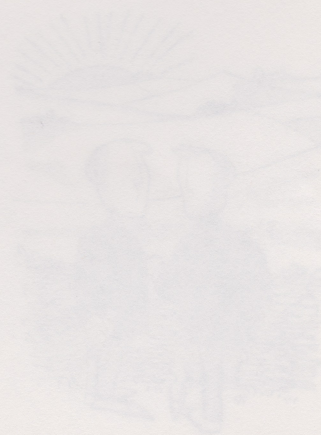
Figure 27 (ii) 7

¹ For a general discussion of contemporary theories in political science see W. J. M. Mackenzie, *Politics and Social Science*, Penguin Books, 1967, pp. 169–87.

and the political order in any single society has to be studied empirically if it is to be understood. Nevertheless, models of a political system help with the task of fitting together a large number of jigsaw pieces by pointing at an abstract level and in a generalised form to the ways of organising and expressing the whole pattern of political relationships. At the same time they direct attention to effects of change in one part of a system on other parts, and they aid comparative enquiry. But, and this was the final point, understanding how parts like legislatures and interest groups fit together into the whole political order of a society through one or other model of a political system is only one approach: it is fashionable and important but there are other rival or complementary ones.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this course narrative has been dealing with two points. First it has taken up the issue of what is to be regarded as the political dimension in society and how it has been pointed out that politics has come to be defined as an abstract level in the light of the problem of understanding politics and government in terms of the diverse societies and while there is no general agreement on how to express what is central to politics the generalisation is on the exercise of power, rule or authority. In the second part the course narrative has concentrated on explaining how the notion of a political system has helped to integrate the respective knowledge about a wide range of political institutions and political relationships. Hence the major points that have been made are that no notion of a system or particular model explains an actual situation.



"I still think a little bit
getting out of a boat, or at least
more interesting."

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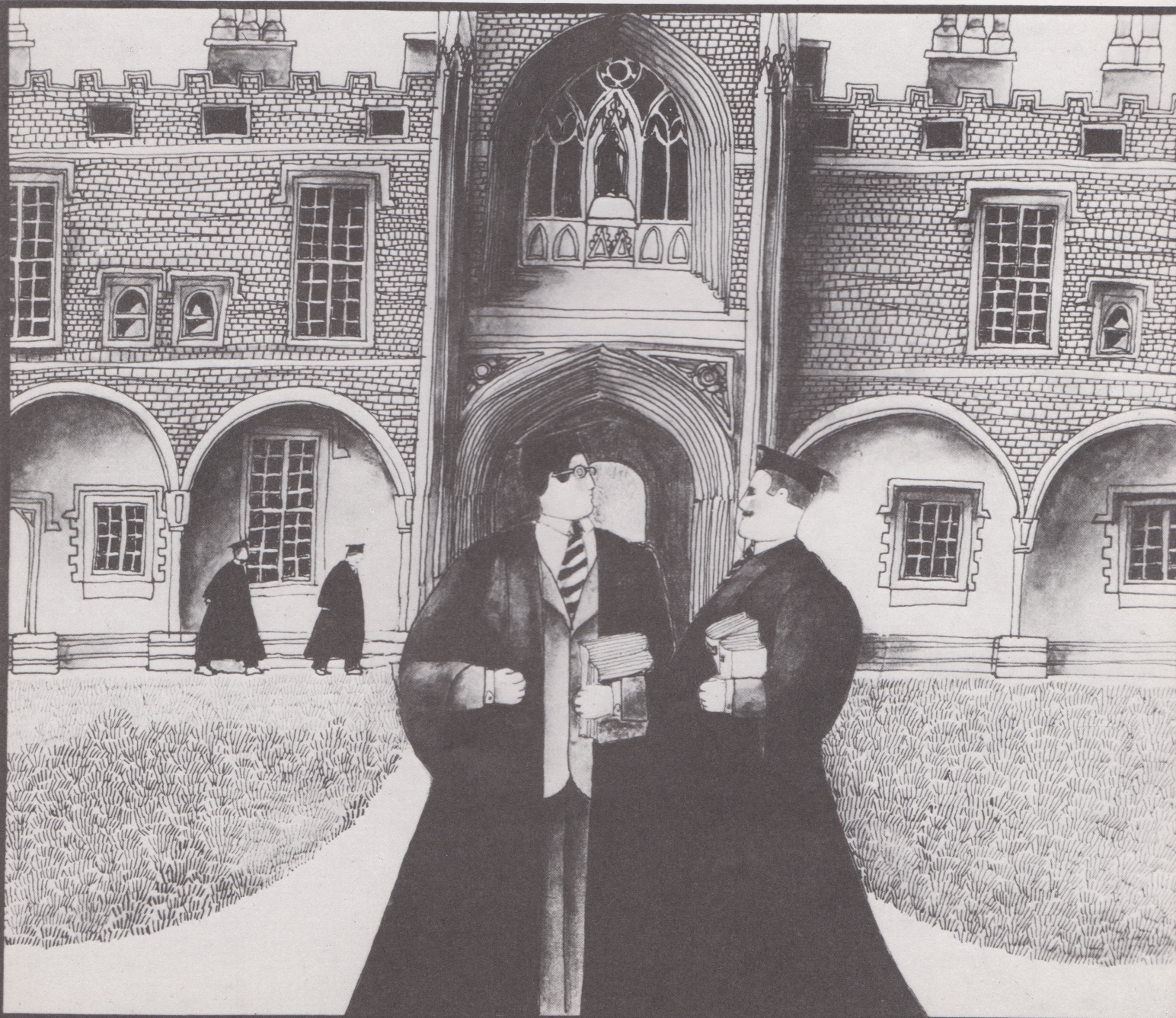
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- Barnes and Noble Inc. for E. C. SMITH and A. J. ZURCHAR (eds.), *A Dictionary of American Politics*.
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- Little, Brown and Company for S. A. ALMOND and S. B. POWELL, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*.
- Macmillan and Co. Ltd. for SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK, *History of the Science of Politics*.
- Princeton University Press for D. EASTON, 'An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems' in *World Politics*, 1957.
- Daily Mirror* for Figs. 27 (ii) 1-7.

Unit 28

Politics in Groups



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POLITICS IN GROUPS

I INTRODUCTION

The past four units have concentrated on government in society. We have been considering society at the macro level – that is we have been looking at the whole society whether this is the United States or Southern Rhodesia or whether it is the Tiv; and we have been indicating both the general sorts of political institutions and political attitudes that exist in these societies, and the ways in which they are interrelated. Finally, in the latter part of the previous unit, we considered how the parts and the pattern of relationships in the society could be described using the idea of a political system.

So far, therefore, in these units on government and politics, we have been looking at the constituent parts of political systems and the way they were interrelated. At one level, an understanding of politics and government involves identifying these parts – the interest groups, political parties, legislature, executive, and so on – and seeing how they are linked to other parts of the system. We saw, for example, that one question asked about interest groups was ‘do they normally operate more on the legislature or the executive – or do they work on both equally?’ Thus our attention has been concentrated on institutions and on the external relationships which link them to other parts of the political system.

This unit takes the discussion a stage further by looking at what happens within these institutions. It points, first, to the existence of a political process within them and explains the significance of this for the wider political system of the society; and, secondly, it indicates the existence by extension of a political process within other, and from the viewpoint of the state non-political, associations in society.

2 POLITICS WITHIN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The parts which together make up political systems are by no means monolithic wholes. Congress may be spoken of as a unit when its relations with the President are discussed, and the Cabinet in the UK is described in Bagehot’s memorable words as ‘a combining committee – a *hyphen* which joins, a *buckle* which fastens, the legislative part of the State to the executive part of the State’, but each, while it can be presented as a unit in one context, can also be investigated in terms of its parts. What is Congress made up of and how are these parts interrelated? In part the answer is that it comprises 537 individuals organised in two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives, and further organised into committees and sub-committees, parties and factions. Similarly, a Tiv lineage is a unit when it is confronting another lineage, but it is made up even at its smallest, of segments, compounds, and individuals. Each of the institutions within a political system has in other words its own constituent elements.

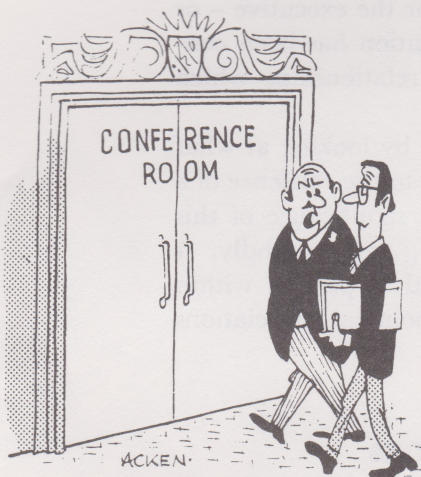
2.1 Authority within Political Institutions

Each, moreover, of these institutions, whether it be Congress or a Tiv lineage, is an active unit. And among the activities that take

place within these institutions is that of deciding what the institution should do. Some of these decisions may have a significance only for its members: few beyond Congressmen, for example, are deeply interested in Congress's catering arrangements. But decisions may have a decisive effect on what happens in the wider political system of the society. The decision that Congress takes may be to deny to the President power to commit American troops in Cambodia at his own discretion. In Congress, Tiv lineages and other institutions, decisions are taken therefore about how its authority shall be exercised. Although these organisations are unlike the state in that they do not claim exclusively to regulate the use of legitimate physical force within their institution, there is nevertheless within the institution a concentration, as Dahl put it, of 'power, rule or authority'.

2.2 Internal Political Processes

Moreover, the manner in which decisions are taken about how the authority or power in an institution is to be exercised, constitutes a political process. In many organisations the procedures are regular and formalised. Congress in the United States and Parliament in



"... and kindly stop referring to it as the gas-chamber."

Figure 28.1

Britain have clearly established and complex procedures – the latter carefully recorded in the Bible of parliamentary procedure, Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* – but in parties and even in a Tiv lineage, the procedures are sufficiently regular for it to be possible to describe them as a political system. Just as in states or stateless societies there are political systems, so within many individual organisations there are patterns of relations between constituent parts that occur consistently enough for them to be described as the political system of the organisation.

Thus in the institutions which operate within the political system of a society there are other political processes and systems. These systems are internal to the institution: they determine how the power of the particular institution is exercised and how the institution operates within the wider political system of the whole society, and these internal political systems determine how the institution affects decisions about the exercise of legitimate force in the society. How institutions act in the political system of the whole society,

what the institution seeks to achieve, and how it seeks to achieve them, is affected by the working of its own internal political system.

2.3 An Example

These major points have thus far been expressed largely in abstract terms, but they are abstractions from concrete situations. Consider as an example the situation within the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union during the 1939-45 war. This Union was the major representative body for the European employees of Rhodesia Railways. The Union was organised in a common form for associational interest groups with a governing congress, elected executive, permanent secretariat and local branches. The Union had been an active and relatively effective organ for advancing the interests of European employees since its founding in 1916, but in 1942 it was on the point of collapse. There were three competing *factions* – groupings that were insufficiently formalised to be regarded as competing political parties within the Union – and these factions had reached the point where the survival of the Union was less important to them than were the causes for which the factions stood. One faction was committed to safeguarding the interests of European workers not only against management but against African railway workers. The faction supported the Union's existing leaders and supported the covert attachment of the Union to one of two competing Labour Parties in the colony's legislature – the Labour Party which shared the factions' objectives and was at the time part of the colony's National Government. The second faction within the Railway Union was based on certain of the Union's branches and was fervently committed to a different cause – that of advancing socialism. Led by a Scotsman from Clydeside who had been brought up in the fraternity of the Independent Labour Party in Britain, the faction was committed to advancing the interests of the proletariat whatever the colour of the workers' skin and to overcoming a capitalist order; the existing war was to them a capitalist war and they would have no truck with it. With these aims the faction attempted to detach the Union from the first Labour Party and instead to link it to a socialist Labour Party which, within the colony's legislature, constituted the opposition to the National Government. Both these factions were anathema to a third which comprised in particular the white collar workers in the different branches of the Union and for whom any involvement of the Union with political parties was to be avoided. These white collar workers sought to detach the Union from its entanglement with party politics. Three factions stood for three irreconcilable goals, and each sought to see that the Union advanced its purposes and its alone. The internal political system of the Union centred on the activities of three competing factions which were seeking to control the Union and use the Union to advance their particular causes.

In 1942, however, the Socialist faction had reached the point of seceding from the Union for want of success in achieving its objectives within it. This threat to the existence of the Union brought action that had a significance for the wider political system of the society. In order to save the Union, the leaders did two things. First, they hurriedly pressed a series of claims for increased wages and better conditions of work. When they failed to secure immediate satisfaction from the employers, the leaders whipped up feelings in the

Union – thus directing workers' attention to their collective interests as workers, over and against those of the railway management, and diverting them from the struggles between the factions. At the same time the leaders of the Union concerted action with other unions in bringing the two rival Labour Parties together, so as to remove one of the main irritants in the situation. The concerted action of the unions achieved this, and in the process broke up the National Government. The two Labour Parties were brought together in a new united Labour Party and this sat in the Legislature in opposition to the governing party. The political conflict within the Union had had important effects in the political system of the society (Murray, 1970, pp. 230–1).

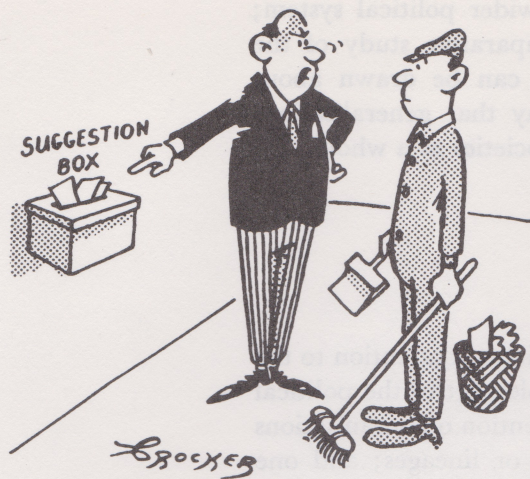
There was nothing unusual about this episode in the recent history of Southern Rhodesia. There is in all organisations a process of determining how power in the organisation shall be exercised. Formally established units like the Railwaymen's branches, and informal institutions like the three competing factions of railway employees, are interacting, co-operating and competing to affect decisions. Their interrelationships are commonly sufficiently regular to be described as a political system. And the end result of this politics within an organisation may be, as with the Railway Workers' Union, decisions and activity with a significant effect in the wider political system of the society.

2.4 Significance for Working of Political System of Society

This internal politics within a particular institution can have a major significance for the political system of the society, and the sum of the political activity in all the political institutions of the society provides much of the drive in the working of politics and government in society. Since this politics within institutions is so important, much attention is given to it in the study of government. Some of the interest is directed to understanding how politics operates within a particular institution. Questions are asked such as, how does the House of Commons operate? or how does politics work within a particular political party? Some attention, similarly, is given to how a particular decision came to be taken within an organisation, or how it came about that an institution acted in a particular way. Still others have investigated politics within institutions comparatively in order to discover what regularities there are and thus what generalisations can validly be made about it. Neumann, it may be recalled, described this, in relation to political parties, as the sociology of political parties, and he directed particular attention to the work of Robert Michels.

2.5 Political Scientists and the Study of Internal Political Processes

Michels' study of political parties was one example of the comparative study of the internal politics of organisations, and I will discuss it simply as one instance, though a particularly influential one. Michels took as the basis for his comparative study the internal working of declaredly democratic socialist parties in late nineteenth-century Europe. The chapter in the *Reader* (pp. 523–35) taken from his study, entitled 'The Struggle Among the Leaders Themselves', indicates the nature of his general analysis. Here he is considering the ways in which leaders react to challenges to their leadership and the variety of methods they use to preserve their own positions – curbing freedom of speech, buying over the challengers, and so on.

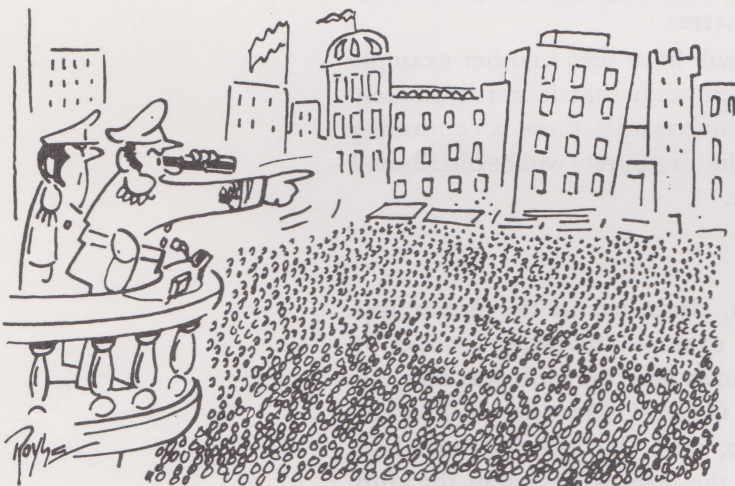


"Empty that at once!"

Figure 28.2, 28.3 'Styles of "democratic" leadership?'

At the same time, he considers the techniques adopted to advance their ambitions by new leaders and the effect of their challenges to party leadership.

Michels' analysis, however, was not concerned simply with discerning the common techniques and devices used by leaders; he went further, to argue that the effect of political activities within declaredly democratic political organisations always and invariably had the result of concentrating effective rule within the hands of a few: he postulated an Iron Law of Oligarchy. It is generally agreed that Michels was overstating the case when he spoke of an Iron Law, but the general trend of evidence does indicate that in the internal



"Wake up that man at the back there!"

politics of representative associations there is a tendency towards oligarchy – that is a trend towards a situation where the association is ruled by a few.

Michels' work, and the generalisations he made, is presented as simply one example of the conclusions derived from the comparative study of the internal politics of political institutions. His work rests, moreover, on the three assumptions that have been spelled out here. First, that there is a political system within organisations that operate as political institutions in societies; secondly, that this

internal politics has a significance for the wider political system; and, thirdly, that on the basis of the comparative study of the internal politics of institutions, conclusions can be drawn about tendencies and regularities in the same way that generalisations can be made about the political systems of societies as a whole.

3 POLITICS IN NON-POLITICAL GROUPS

3.1 Similarities with Political Institutions

So far this account of politics in groups has directed attention to the political institutions which have a recognisable part in the political system of the society. I have concentrated attention on organisations such as legislatures, parties, interest groups or lineages; and one reason for this is that we have been making the point that these institutions have their own internal political systems which affect the way they behave as units within the political system of the society. Yet, if we are concerned with the internal working of organisations, there is nothing so peculiar about government departments, political parties or interest groups that places them in a different order from churches, football clubs or shopping centres. In these other associations also, there is power, rule or authority, and decisions are taken about their exercise. In a Congregational church, to take one example, the members meeting together decide who to invite to be their minister, they elect deacons to constitute their executive committee, they decide who will organise the flowers for church services and disagree about the dates for annual fêtes and garden parties. There is authority within the church, and a process operates to determine how it is exercised: there is a political system albeit one which in this instance is carefully submerged and expressed by those involved in wholly unpolitical terms.

In television programme 27, you will have seen another example of politics operating within an organisation that is not intimately connected with national politics. In universities there is continuing political activity directed to deciding how resources will be distributed and how the university will be ruled.

3.2 An Example

The football club at Pentreduwaith, described in the *Reader* (pp. 535-8), provides us with another example revealing politics in operation. Frankenberg's account shows how the club was formally organised: there was an Annual General Meeting, a Football Committee and a Supporters' Club, with the heart of the Committee's business that of deciding on the team to represent the club. Frankenberg also shows that there were different factions active: the men centring on the Football Committee and the women united through the Supporters' Club, the groups around individuals (Charley and the miners, 'those Biggs'), the Committee members who favoured having a team composed of local boys, and those who favoured bringing in better footballers from outside, and so on. He shows the techniques used to influence how power was exercised: the informal criticism, the support for occasions like Whist Drives – or absence from them, the Secretary's way of controlling the flow of information and his ability to carry out, or otherwise, the Committee's decisions about who should be in the team.

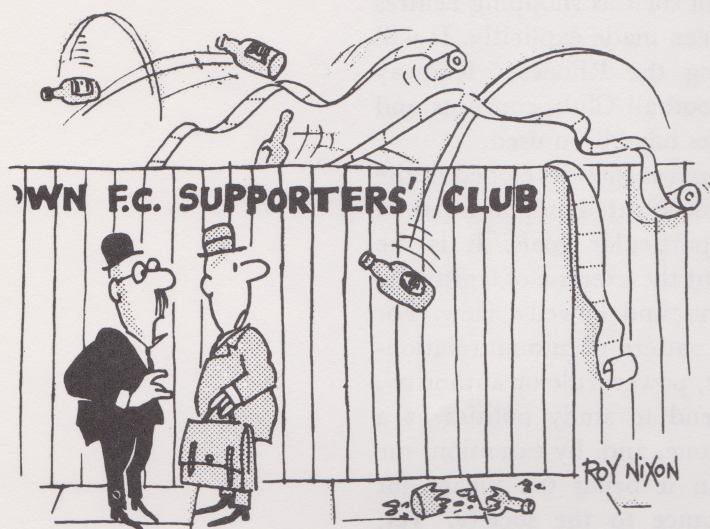
Frankenberg provides a picture of the politics that were going on



'Don't look now, but isn't that our new goalkeeper?'

Figure 28.4 'The results of team selection?'

in a football club in a North Wales village. It had no immediate effect on the politics of the whole country and no direct relevance for it. But it shows that politics is not an activity which takes place only at the level of the state.



'I see they've reported back for training!'

Figure 28.5

The Pentreduwaith Football Club has in this way the same significance as the shopping centre and queue which were considered in Unit 26, and on which extracts appeared in the *Reader* (pp. 477-90). The American shopping centre and the football queue in Melbourne, Australia, were considered as stateless political systems: their form as political systems differed therefore from the Pentreduwaith Football Club, but they are all nevertheless political systems. Politics may operate in a state-like situation or take a stateless form, whichever it is, it remains political activity.

3.3 Conclusion

Politics is not therefore something that operates only at the level of the state. As has been indicated in earlier units, there are certain peculiarities about politics in the state: states alone claim the authority to control the legitimate exercise of force in society, and the institutional structure, through which politics takes place, tends

to have certain distinctive features – certain sorts of formal structure, and a particular range of informal political institutions for instance. But the activity of politics is something that pervades organisations and situations in society whether they are legislatures or parties, churches or football clubs, shopping centres or football queues. Within all these there is an internal political process and frequently this is stable enough to be recognised as a system. Some of the institutions and some of the processes have a direct significance for the wider political system of the society. Others, if they have a relevance at all, have an importance only to the extent that they encourage and inculcate certain ideas about power and authority, and equip people with particular skills – they help in other words to mould a distinctive political culture for the society.

4 THE STUDY OF POLITICS IN GROUPS

Whether politics in institutions is studied because of its own intrinsic interest, or because of its significance for the politics and government of the whole society, it can be analysed using much of the understanding gained from the study of state and stateless political systems. The usefulness of concepts employed in investigating stateless political systems to an analysis of such as shopping centres and queues is a point that has already been made explicitly. It will also have been clear that in discussing the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union or the Pentrediwaith Football Club, concepts and insights developed from the study of states have been used.

On the other hand, the concepts and approaches developed in the study of politics and government have concentrated on politics as an activity that is directed to achieving particular goals. It is the process by which decisions are taken about the exercise of legitimate force that constitutes politics in Almond and Powell's view. For Dahl a 'political system is any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule or authority'. Students of politics and government tend to study politics as a process for determining how things are done, and, by extension, the significance of politics in society lies in it being the means for taking a range of decisions of importance to the society. Yet, particularly when a local association becomes the object of attention, politics can be seen to have a wider social significance than simply that of taking certain decisions.

The politics of recreation in Pentrediwaith determined who should play in the village football team, but as Frankenberg indicates it had a more general significance for Pentre. Politics as an activity had wider social functions and effects. It brought Pentre into contact with other villages; the way it was conducted reinforced obligations of reciprocity; and it raised issues – the morality or otherwise of sweepstakes – of importance in the religious life of the community. As goal-directed activity, students of politics and government have developed concepts and techniques for studying it, but an understanding of the general social significance of political activity takes the study of politics more into a realm where other social scientists, and particularly sociologists, have a particular expertise.

For students of politics and government, a recognition that politics is an activity that does not belong simply to the state, nor

that its sole significance lies in its effect on the exercise of power and authority, has raised the issue of what is the proper object of attention. In previous units one subsidiary theme has been the progression of interests in political science. We have followed the broadening area of attention from philosophical questions about what ought to be, and what exists in terms of law, to politics in stateless societies, football clubs, and queues, and we have discussed the changing interpretation of what is to be regarded as political.

With the field being extended, it appears that there has been developing among students of government and politics a division between those whose concern is to understand what state governments are doing, how and why; and, on the other hand, those who wish to pursue the study of political systems; to understand the nature of regular relationships that focus on power, rule or authority and on the wider social significance of politics. The interests of the latter link them as students of politics to the concerns and approaches of sociologists. They lead on to a consideration of political relationships as one of the phenomena which, when taken with others, constitutes society in the round. They prompt such questions as – what function is performed by political competition, how does political interaction affect other social relationships and values? Such interests contrast with those of the student of government who, while exploiting knowledge from other areas of the social sciences, is preoccupied with understanding why particular governments come to do the things that they do.

5 CONCLUSION

This unit has been making five main points. First it has pointed out that the interrelated units that make up the political system of a society have their own internal political process which affects their behaviour in the society's political system. Secondly, it is possible to study this process comparatively and Michels' generalisations illustrate the sort of conclusions reached. Thirdly, in a wide range of institutions which have no place in the political system of a society, there is similarly a political process operating. Fourthly, for the analysis of the political process within institutions, the approaches developed for the understanding of state and stateless political systems has considerable use. And, finally, the recognition that there are political systems operating over a large field of society has widened the scope of political analysis and had effects on the field of politics and government.

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Notes

WHY PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIETIES

- 1 The Fundamentals of Human Nature
- 2 Man and Government
- 3 The Economic Basis of Society
- 4 Society and Environment
- 5 Man as a Social Animal

HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIETIES

Socialization

- 6 Child Socialization
- 7 Personality Development
- 8 Attitudes and Emotions
- 9 The Family and its Functions

Economy and Society

- 10 Economic Wants
- 11 Production and Supply
- 12 Markets and Prices
- 13 The Sociology of Economic Behaviour

Money, Wealth and Class

- 14 The Working of the Economy
- 15 Money
- 16 Distribution of Income
- 17 Social Stratification
- 18 The Psychology of Social Class

Special Aspects of Society

- 19 Rural Land Use
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Government and Politics

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WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS PEOPLE FACE IN SOCIETIES

The Population Explosion - an Interdisciplinary Approach

- 32 The Demographer and his World
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- 35 Population Growth and Social and Political Systems
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UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY UNITS

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- 2 Men and Government
- 3 The Economic Basis of Society
- 4 Societies and Environments
- 5 Man as a Social Animal

2 HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIETIES

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